IRISHMEN ALL

by G. A. Birmingham

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IRISHMEN ALL

THE GREATER OFFICIAL

IRISHMEN ALL

By GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM
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WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY JACK B. YEATS

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THE LIST OF CHAPTERS

I. THE HIGHER OFFICIAL . . . *Page* 3

II. THE MINOR OFFICIAL 21

III. THE POLICEMAN 39

IV. THE SQUIREEN 59

V. THE POLITICIAN 79

VI. THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN 99

VII. THE FARMER 117

VIII. THE PUBLICAN 137

IX. THE EXILE FROM ERIN 157

X. THE PARISH PRIEST 173

XI. THE "MINISTER" 193

XII. THE YOUNG LADY AND GENTLEMAN IN BUSINESS 211

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

from oil paintings by

JACK B. YEATS

THE HIGHER OFFICIAL . . . . *Frontispiece*

THE MINOR OFFICIAL . . . . . *Page* 8

THE POLICE SERGEANT 40

THE SQUIREEN 72

THE POLITICIAN 88

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN 104

THE FARMER 120

THE PUBLICAN 152

THE EXILE FROM ERIN 168

THE PRIEST 184

THE MINISTER 200

THE COUNTRY SHOP ASSISTANTS 216

CHAPTER ONE
THE HIGHER OFFICIAL

IRISHMEN ALL CHAPTER ONE THE HIGHER OFFICIAL

I HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED BATES AS A typical representative of his class. I am not sure, even now, though I know him very well, what his exact position is in the Irish official world; but I know that it is a high one. He is the kind of man who is consulted frequently by Chief Secretaries and Lords Lieutenant, who is sent for hurriedly and made to go to London in order that Cabinet Ministers may find out from him what they can do or cannot do in Ireland. Afterwards they do what Bates suggests—what my Bates, or any other of the half dozen men like him suggests—and defend themselves when they are attacked by repeating all that Bates has said to them, but of course without mentioning Bates. His name seldom appears in the newspapers, is never quoted in speeches, and, although it is printed often enough at the bottom of official documents, it is almost unknown to the public. Neither Bates nor any other member of his class ever has the limelight thrown on him. His place is in the wings. Politicians of one sort or another do the pirouetting, mince across the stage on the tips of their toes or fling up their legs amid whirls of flying draperies. The public applauds or hoots them; but Bates is the man who devises their antics for them. He, in Ireland at all events, arranges and directs the great ballet of Government. Perhaps, since there is more in it than dancing, we ought to say com-

poses the Révue, the one spectacle which all Ireland perpetually enjoys, in which every Irishman is interested.

My first meeting with Bates remains a vivid memory. I had never come into contact with a high official before. I am ashamed to say that I did not at that time realise the importance of the class. I supposed then, as many other innocent people did and still do, that Chief Secretaries and Lords Lieutenant not only appear to govern, but really do govern, Ireland. I supposed that they were more or less responsible to public opinion, at all events to the opinion of members of their own party. My meeting with Bates taught me better.

I had accepted, I remember, an invitation from Kendrick to spend a few days with him. Kendrick lives in one of those places which, for some reason, railway companies have decided to snub. You get there with extreme difficulty after changing trains at three different junctions, and each time you change you have to wait half an hour or more for another train. It was at the first of these junctions that I caught sight of Bates. The day was a very cold one, and I sought shelter from the wind in a miserable shed which boasted, by means of a large notice on its door, that it was a first-class waiting-room. My temper began to give way when I found that I had to wait in it for half an hour. I paced up and down trying to

keep warm. I passed and repassed Bates. He sat on a narrow wooden bench with his suit case and a kit bag beside him. He had rolled a rug round his legs. He had turned up a high coat collar. I could see no more of his face than the tip of his nose and his eyes. No nose-tip is very expressive. Bates's, having turned purple, suggested that he was cold, but nothing more. It was his eyes which told me something about him. They were gentle, enduring, rather hopeless eyes. I saw almost at once that he was a man of deep philosophic spirit. The "whips and scorns" which "the patient merit of the unworthy" takes from railway companies had no power to move him to the faintest irritation.

I saw Bates again at the next junction, seated in the same attitude, having exactly the same expression in his eyes. My ill temper was keeping me warm. His philosophy left him a prey to the wind, which was getting bitterer as the afternoon darkened, but saved him from the mental wear and tear of helpless irritation. When that period of waiting was over we got into the same compartment. I did not seek Bates's company. My bad temper made me wish for solitude. Bates, I am sure, did not seek mine. But there were only two first-class compartments, and only one of them invited smoking. We both wanted to smoke. After the third change—it was by this time half-past four o'clock and nearly dark—we again entered the

same compartment and I ventured on a remark about the wickedness of railway companies. Bates responded with a slow, gentle smile. He gave me the impression that the evil of life had for a long time failed to move him to any emotion except boredom. There was, so he seemed to hint, nothing new to be said or thought about railway companies, the income tax, the White Slave Traffic, or any of the other things which move inexperienced people to violent rage. An inscrutable fate has ordained that these things are. The proper attitude of the wise man is patient endurance.

I suggested that since we were travelling together in this particular train we must both be going to be Kendrick's guests. The line of railway on which we were after our last change led to Kendrick's house and, so far as I knew, to nowhere else. Bates admitted, smiling again, that he was going to be my fellow-guest. I began to feel the attraction of the man. His very silence—and most of the talking was done by me—made me want to know him better. He was indeed as far as possible from reminding me of those strong, silent Englishmen whose manners, and especially whose chins and teeth, are so attractive to some novelists. Bates's silences were suggestive of extreme gentleness. I was uneasily conscious that most of my remarks struck him as banalities, but he was evidently tolerant of every kind of foolishness.

Kendrick welcomed us breezily when we arrived. He had been out snipe-shooting all day and was in that condition of physical well-being which is induced by hard exercise in cold weather. I, who had been shivering at railway junctions and snuggling vainly for warmth in the corners of draughty compartments, felt Kendrick's breeziness as almost insulting. Bates, at full stretch in a deep chair beside the fire, sipped his tea and reached out long lean hands to the blaze. He was as tolerant of Kendrick's sniping experiences as he had been of my meaningless remarks. Once he told us a shooting story. It was a very good story, much better than any of Kendrick's, certainly far more interesting than anything I had said. But Bates did not seem eager to tell it. Instead of pushing his way into the conversation, as most men do when they have a story to tell, he waited for a pause. He looked at Kendrick and at me to see if either of us wanted to speak. Only when we had remained silent for some time did he begin. I gathered, partly from the story itself, partly from the respectful way in which Kendrick listened to it, that Bates had been a sportsman in his day. I also imagined that sport, like most other things, had lost a good deal of its charm for him. No doubt governing Ireland is more thrilling work than letting off guns at small birds.

Kendrick's is a bachelor establishment, but—or is "so" the proper word to use?—he gave us a very good

dinner. Afterwards we talked about Ireland. Kendrick, after the manner of his kind, blustered about the way in which Irish affairs are managed. His estate was, so to speak, under the hammer. The Congested Districts Board was bargaining for the purchase of it. Kendrick did not want to sell, but had just sense enough to understand that he must bow to the inevitable. Anyone who has ever seen an Irish country gentleman bowing to the inevitable will realise what I mean when I say that Kendrick blustered. Bates listened to him with a tolerant smile. Kendrick talked sound economic sense, the very soundest possible. All sense was on his side. Nothing could possibly be plainer than the folly of the experiments of the particular Board which has undertaken to play Providence in the west of Ireland. There is, there can be, nothing before us if things go on as they are going, except ruin.

Bates slipped in a remark now and then, sideways. Kendrick was firing his heavy artillery at me. Because I am a Nationalist and do not believe that England can govern Ireland, he chooses to regard me as in full sympathy with all the vague philanthropies of English Governments. Bates really is responsible for a good deal of what our Governments do, though perhaps not for the Congested Districts Board. But Kendrick, in his muddle-headed way, evidently regarded Bates as his natural ally in an attack on what

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

he supposed to be my politics. There is no better fellow in the world than Kendrick, but his very straightforwardness of character makes him a singularly bad critic of Irish life. By the time we had reached our second cigars I noticed that the booming of Kendrick's great Tory guns was becoming intermittent instead of constant. Bates's gentle interruptions—a still, small voice after the rending of mountain sides—became more and more frequent. Soon it was Bates who talked. Kendrick and I did no more than encourage him with sympathetic attention and with laughter.

Bates was well worth listening to. He told us, in his low soft voice, the most exquisitely amusing stories about the Government of Ireland. I do not remember that he ever smiled himself. His eyes twinkled occasionally, but except for that there was no sign that he found any pleasure in these garnered experiences of his. There was a note of easy, well-bred cynicism in every story he told. No bitterness, certainly no anger, but a clear-sighted appreciation of the quite extraordinary folly of everyone who had ever tried to do anything in Ireland. Bates knew them all. From famous Chief Secretaries down to the floundering orators of the various Leagues, he passed them before us. They hopped about like marionettes, and the antics of every one of them were ridiculous. Kendrick guffawed with delight. He could forgive the caps and bells in which Bates dress-

ed the spokesmen of High Toryism in the House of Lords for the sake of being made to see the absurdities of the men he hated most. I, who cherish far down in me a carefully concealed idealism, felt slightly pained even while I laughed. I should have liked to find some Lancelot brave, some Galahad pure. But Bates knew his subject, and I felt it vain to make a protest. There is a great Greek word used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to describe the position of all human beings before the eyes of God. They are caught and stretched backwards so that there is no possibility of covering shamefacedness or hiding anything. Ireland and Irish life lay thus before Bates, and he smiled. It is perhaps permissible to hope that God feels no more than a similar tolerant amusement at what He sees.

Bates's cynical appreciation of us all was the kindliest thing imaginable, so kindly that I gradually came to doubt whether the man was a cynic at all. Now that I know him better I recognise that he is nothing of the sort. Even that night, before we went at last to bed, I felt that there was a real love for Ireland and a genuine hopefulness underlying all his amusement at our absurdities. Bates is, after all, not a mere onlooker. He has kept Ireland going, so to speak, during that peculiarly difficult period when almost all Irishmen combined to reduce her affairs to a deadlock. Bates has governed. It cannot be pre-

tended that he, or any other member of the class to which he belongs, has governed in accordance with the popular will, but he has governed with a steady eye to the general welfare. There is a great tradition of public service among the high permanent officials in Ireland, and their work has been done in the face of amazing difficulties.

I do not suppose that officials in any other country have ever occupied quite so difficult a position as that of Bates and his colleagues. For the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century Ireland was governed somewhat in the same way as the rest of the United Kingdom. There were Irish Whigs and Irish Tories, representing in Parliament constituencies which had somehow been induced to elect them. When a Tory Government was in power at Westminster the Irish Tories formed part of the majority by which it held office, and they imposed their views upon the statesmen who were directly responsible for Irish affairs. When a Whig Government came into power the Irish Whigs had the same opportunity of helping to govern Ireland. Behind each Chief Secretary who came over to Ireland was a body of Irish opinion. Irishmen inscribed their views of things on the virgin page of his mind. Round the table of every hospitable Lord Lieutenant gathered those of the Irish gentry who belonged to his party, and impressed on him the things which he ought and ought not to do. The per-

manent officials of those days were public servants. They carried out the policies of Governments. They neither suggested nor dictated them.

Then came the days when the amazing policy of Parnell swept three-fourths of the country into a new Nationalism. The new Nationalists steadily refused to have anything to do with governing Ireland. They would not dine with the Lord Lieutenant. They would not undertake the task of amicably instructing the Chief Secretary. They would not take office themselves or do anything except practise a sleepless opposition to all that was done. Irish representatives no longer influenced the Irish Government. They extorted from it what they could by mere force and open hostility. What were the nominal governors, those responsible for the conduct of public affairs, to do? The Lords Lieutenant and Chief Secretaries who came over to undertake the thankless task knew no more than their predecessors what to do. How could they know? But now they had no one to advise them. There were indeed a few Ulster members who called themselves Conservatives. But there were practically no Irish Liberals. The Government became a government from outside with scarcely a rag of sanction from anyone in Ireland wherewith to cover its nakedness. It was a government of one nation by another, and the governed nation made no pretence of liking the situation.

THE HIGHER OFFICIAL

Between the bewildered Englishmen in Dublin Castle and the openly hostile Irish people stood the permanent officials of the Irish offices and boards. These men knew Ireland, and, as it turned out, were capable not only of administering but of governing. They stepped, not perhaps very willingly, into the places left vacant by the failing Irish aristocracy, the places which the Irish democracy was not yet ready to fill. They devised policies, instructed Chief Secretaries, saved Lords Lieutenant from total loss of dignity, and, generally speaking, ran Ireland. It is to the credit of the Englishmen who were at the head of Irish affairs during this time that, if they did not understand Ireland, they knew how to choose men. They gathered round them an extraordinarily able body of permanent officials. I do not know which of them discovered Bates, who was originally quite an obscure person in an unimportant post. But whoever it was who promoted him to his present high office deserved well both of Ireland and England. For Bates, like all his colleagues, has done a difficult job very well.

Such a system of government could not, of course, last for ever. We live in days when our rulers find it necessary to have some kind of popular sanction for what they do. It was Lord Randolph Churchill who first hit on the idea of giving the Roman Catholic bishops a voice in the government of Ireland. It was

recognised that if the priests were satisfied the rest of Ireland would remain tolerably quiet. The new policy, while it seemed to regularise the position of the Government, added fresh difficulties to those which beset the men who were actually governing. It had been hard enough before to keep the machinery of Irish government running smoothly. It became much more difficult when bishops' croziers got entangled in the wheels. It is to me a matter of small wonder that Bates acquired a habit of surveying all human affairs with a half smile of cynical amusement. The surprising thing is that the cynicism did not eat into his soul, that he succeeded in remaining, as he has remained, an altruist at heart, with a splendidly high sense of duty and a certain hopefulness about the ultimate destiny of Ireland.

But the day of Bates and his class is passing away. There will always be high permanent officials, of course. As democracy comes into its kingdom there will be more and more of them. Already they are increasing and multiplying even in Ireland. But the new generation of officials will not enjoy the power which Bates had, still has indeed, although he knows that he is losing it. The conditions which required Bates no longer exist. Parnell and his followers tried to obtain the complete control of the government of Ireland by refusing to exercise the influence in it which the party system—that curious product of Anglo-Saxon

political genius—allowed them. Their successors in title, our contemporary Nationalists, have gone back to the position of Parnell's predecessors. They have become, in everything except name, the Irish branch of the Liberal Party. They claim and enjoy all the influence in Irish affairs which Welsh Liberals and Scottish Liberals have in the management of their countries. It is they who suggest the policies of Liberal Chief Secretaries and enjoy the patronage which intimacy with a Lord Lieutenant gives. Parnell made the union between England and Ireland absurd by insisting that Ireland should be governed as a conquered country. Our later Nationalists have made the Union a workable reality again by accepting, not yet office itself, but all the power which office gives, whenever Liberalism is in the ascendant. It is no longer necessary for the permanent official to be a statesman as well as an administrator. Bates, and perhaps a dozen more men like him, undertook the work done by the representatives of the Irish aristocracy before Parnell swept them away. He filled a gap. Now the Irish democracy, or the men who claim to represent it, are beginning to do the work, and Bates must step aside. He will do so, I imagine, with no great regret. He got little credit for what he did. He had an enormous amount of responsibility. It will be much more amusing for him to watch the blunders of the new men than it was to avoid blundering himself.

But one function will, for some time at least, remain to the greater Irish official, outside the routine of his office work. He will continue to be, like the tree which Moses cast into the well at Marah, the sweetener of Irish life. Every other public man in Ireland must either be or pretend to be a fanatic. In England, I believe, this is not so. The English people like to think that their political leaders, after abusing each other savagely in public, dine together on Sundays, and sit with their arms round each other's necks in the smoking-rooms of their clubs. The theory appears to be that such friendliness after hostility displays a magnanimity of a very desirable kind. We are either much less simple-minded or much more sincere than the English are. If we heard of two of our politicians, a leader of Orangemen and a Nationalist, kissing each other privately in a wood, we should at once cease to believe in either of them. We demand of our political leaders not only that they should say that their opponents are devils—the English expect that—but that they should act in private life as if what they said were true. No Christian man would spend a week-end with a devil, play bridge with him, or drink his wine. No Irish political leader dare be the friend of his opponent.

And what we enjoin on our leaders we practise conscientiously ourselves. We may not in our hearts be, but we feel it due to our characters for consistency

to pretend we are fanatics. Hence there is a certain bitterness about Irish political life which does not exist in England except among Nonconformist ministers and the more violent opponents of Woman Suffrage. The only men who escape this bondage of political consistency are our permanent officials. It is impossible to think of Bates as fanatical on any subject. He sees, even at periods of extreme popular enthusiasm he continues to see, the amusing side of all causes, the absurdities of all political and social creeds. His spirit of bland indifference perceptibly modifies the fury of those with whom he comes in contact. His smile—I have loved Bates's smile ever since I first saw it—exercises over his acquaintances a kind of hypnotic influence. Some smiles have this power. If you look long at the mouth and eyes of Leonardo's wonderful "Monna Lisa" you come in time to feel that nothing in the world is either very good or very bad, that all things are just a little childish once you have tried them. Far be it from me to suggest that our Irish high officials are sated atheists like that wonderful lady whose portrait the world has lost. Bates very likely goes to church when he can. But his feeling towards Irish politics is just what the "Monna Lisa's" was towards love and life and wisdom and fear and all delight. He knows them through and through. He finds them faintly amusing, slightly wearisome.

This is why Dublin is a less desperately earnest city than Belfast. Bates lives near Dublin, and all his fellow-officials live there too. If their duties send them on circuit through the country, their return is always to Killiney or some other neighbouring suburb. At the very worst they go to Dublin when they retire on pension. Their influence has saturated Dublin, and there alone in Ireland it is possible not to take oneself altogether seriously. Belfast is different. Bates is seldom there, and when he is, no one has time to pause and mark his smile. The life of that great city retains all the sharp brininess of pure sea-water. It is clear of any muddy doubtfulness about the entire righteousness or utter iniquity of either cause. In Belfast it would not, I think, be counted for righteousness to Bates that his amused tolerance of all conceivable enthusiasms weans men in time from earnestness in politics. Perhaps Belfast is right. Yet I cannot help feeling that if Bates, when he loses the power he has had so long and used on the whole so well, is still able to infect us with his wistful humour, we may some day arrive at a condition of political apathy which will enable us to live at peace.

CHAPTER TWO
THE MINOR OFFICIAL

CHAPTER II THE MINOR OFFICIAL

MR STANDISH O'GRADY'S *ALL IRELAND Review*, a paper whose decease is much to be lamented, used to be the dumping ground of all the brilliant ideas in Ireland. *The Irish Homestead*, the proper business of which is the support of agricultural co-operation, has succeeded to the glittering inheritance. The editor is no less hospitable than Mr O'Grady, and his notes on the ideas submitted to him have all the luminous commonsense and whimsical unexpectedness which used to be so delightful in the pages of the *All Ireland Review*. A gardener, to give one example, who had been trying to make money by growing figs in Ireland—this was a most original idea—wrote to the *All Ireland Review* to complain that his trees shed their fruit in an untimely way. To him the editor replied: "See Isaiah xxxiv. 4. Perhaps it is a little way they have." We all looked up chapter and verse and discovered that "The host of heaven shall be dissolved . . . as a falling fig from a fig tree." It would be difficult to better the unexpectedness of that as a reply to a gardening correspondent. But, I think, Mr George Russell, the editor of *The Irish Homestead*, has reached the same high level several times. Once some one wrote to him suggesting that all Irish officials should be obliged to wear a uniform, so that we could distinguish them from other men when we met them. This was undoubtedly a brilliant idea, but Mr Russell had an objection to it. Outside observers of our life

—Englishmen, Frenchmen, and others—would mistake the uniform for our national costume.

The danger would be a real one. So great has the number of officials become in Ireland of late years that—we have no exact information—they may even now outnumber the rest of the population. They certainly will soon if we continue to subject ourselves to English social legislation. There are much fewer Irishmen than Englishmen in the United Kingdom, but we have all the officials that they have as well as a great many peculiar to ourselves. There are small towns in the west of Ireland whose economic and social life is profoundly modified by the number of Congested Districts Board officials which inhabits them. Special industries—golf-caddying, for instance—have sprung into existence to meet the requirements of officials. Others, like lodging-house keeping, have assumed a new importance. The shopkeepers find themselves obliged to keep in stock tennis balls, and to increase largely their supply of cigarettes, solely to meet the demand made for these articles by Congested Districts Board officials. The art of flirtation, a few years ago almost lost in these towns, is being very largely practised. Dances are far commoner than they used to be.

But these of course are exceptional cases. The Congested Districts Board alone among the great manufacturers of officials has adopted the policy of

concentration. It fixes upon two or three centres and crowds them with products of its energy, adopting a great principle of Napoleon's tactics and flinging whole battalions against a single point. The other commanders of the forces of officials act differently. They either settle down two or three officials in a large number of places, using them as outpost garrisons; or keep them, like highly mobile scouts, or Methodist ministers, itinerating all over the country. It is difficult, at present, to be certain which system is the more effective. Both work excellently. Almost all Irishmen are now anxious to be enrolled in the official class, want to be taken on as recruits. And this is success; for, as is the case with all other living things, the great object, the ultimate though perhaps unconscious aim of the official class is to reproduce itself and to perpetuate its species. Lions—to take an example—live by killing and eating gazelles. The individual lion probably thinks that the slaughter of gazelles is the sole object of his existence. But this is not really so. Behind his carnivorous appetite lies the great, primal necessity of producing cubs. It is, although he does not know it, for the sake of the future cub that the lion lurks for the gazelle. It is the same with the official. Ask him what he is here for, and he tells you that his business is to watch over the insurance of workmen, to receive the applications of the claimants of Old Age Pensions, or to collect Income Tax. But

these are only the means to the final end of his being. He does these things because the blind life force which dominates all existence forces him to reproduce himself by recruiting his ranks, holds out for him the intoxicating possibility of a country at some future time populated entirely by officials.

Irish Protestants are fond of complaining that they do not get their fair share of official appointments throughout the three-fourths of Ireland in which the Roman Catholics are in a majority. Letters are published in newspapers and speeches are made in which this horrid tyranny is—so the phrase goes—exposed. The Roman Catholics, attacked in this way, have three lines of defence. They say that the Protestants do, as a matter of fact, get quite as many official appointments as they are entitled to, even in the most Roman Catholic parts of Ireland. Nobody will ever know whether this is true or not, because statistics on the subject contradict each other flatly, a habit common with statistics, especially with those called reliable. They also say, quoting other statistics, that before the passing of the Local Government Act the Protestants got far more than their fair share of official appointments. This is probably true. In the good old times when Grand Juries ruled the land and the gentry frequented the state rooms of Dublin Castle the local taxes were collected by the younger sons of the minor landlords, and the job of inspecting drains

for the Board of Works went to the eldest son and was held by him until he succeeded to the family property. The third line of defence is that in the Protestant corner of Ireland the Roman Catholics get no appointments at all. This is, of course, vigorously denied, and proof has more than once been offered that a reasonable number of Roman Catholic scavengers is employed in cleaning the streets of Belfast.

Some day a man, neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic, but perhaps English, will point out that the rigorous exclusion from official appointments is the best thing that could possibly happen to any section of the community. Those who have no hope, absolutely no hope at all, of getting official positions will be obliged to turn to and work at something useful. The victims of religious and political boycotting will become rich, amass fortunes instead of living on salaries. They will develop character, self-reliance, enterprise, perseverance, because without these qualities they would starve, having no quarterly cheques coming in to them with lethal regularity. Having secured wealth and developed character, they will rule the rest of the country and reduce the official class to the position of the unfortunate Gibeonites, which is indeed their proper position, making them hewers of wood and drawers of water.

There is no surer sign of national decadence than

a widespread desire for official positions. The people who want them have lost the adventurous spirit. They no longer see life rich in golden possibilities. The world holds for them no tropic isles whose shores are strewed with rubies ready to the hand of the daring voyager. They are afraid of perilous seas, and feel no longing for faery lands forlorn. For them dangers are not glorious adventures to be braved, but dread things to be avoided. Their ideal is the snug safe house in which they can sit, slippered by the fireside while wild winds rage outside. They pity, they do not envy, the buccaneer whose sails these same storms fill

> "Ev'n till his sail-yards tremble, his mast crack,
> And his rapt ship run on her side so low,
> That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air,"

for whose coming the treasure-laden galleon waits, on whose attack the cities of the west must disgorge their gold.

There always must be in every community men who will not go no-trumps with three aces in their hands, who prefer an inglorious security to the chance of great achievement. These ought to be officials, officials of the minor kind; they are most useful. They will collect taxes, keep the minutes of committee meetings, register the decisions of courts of law, file lists of unemployed workmen, examine the condition of roads, do all sorts of dull things, repining against no monotony so long as they are regularly paid a

living wage, with a prospect of a rise of ten pounds after many years of service and a fair chance of a pension when they reach the age of sixty-five. Society could not exist without these men, for it is difficult to see how the drudgery of life could be got through if we had not a good supply of them. But the world does not progress because of them. It is not they who lead us to the heights or make us great. A nation which has in it many men with timid official souls is not on the way to any greatness. The more general the desire of office becomes, the smaller is the chance of national glory.

There are, of course, in Ireland, as no doubt there are elsewhere, men who accept small salaries and apply themselves to minor official work, through no lack of nobility of soul but through a sincere desire of being serviceable. Some of these are men whose abilities and high characters would secure them high honour and large fortunes if they chose to apply them to the winning of such prizes in the great open market of the world. They prefer to devote themselves to official work because there is a fine idea behind what they are doing and they are able to feel that they are serving their fellow-countrymen. We bow our heads to them as to all altruists. Theirs is assuredly the better part. They are, whether they talk the language of Christianity or not, citizens of that eternal City whose builder and maker is God. They

belong of right to the one great society which consists of

"The noble living and the noble dead."

They have gone forth on the most daring adventure of all, are Galahads lured by the vision of the Holy Grail. To set before them the prizes of wealth or fame is to put temptation in their way. So the devil took our Lord up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Our hero souls will not, any more than He did, fall down and worship for the sake of such rewards.

But it is folly to suppose that most or many of those who struggle for minor official posts have any such fine dreams. Take the case of Michael Grimes. He owns a small huckster's shop in which he sells tin cans, sweeping-brushes, nails, and peppermints. His wife, apprenticed in early girlhood to a dressmaker, tries to earn a little by practising a trade she has never really learned. She is encumbered with babies. Michael is encumbered with debt. The Secretaryship of the Old Age Pensions Committee falls vacant. It carries a salary of seventy pounds a year. Michael has never in his life had an opportunity for studying State philanthropy. He has no special interest in Old Age Pensioners, and would as soon be doing anything else as registering their claims. But seventy pounds a year means security for him. If he can secure it he will be saved from harassing anxiety.

Those babies of his will be fed and clothed. He and his wife will no longer be haunted by the possibility of life in the workhouse. He knows also, if he thinks at all, that the seventy pounds a year will anchor him for life. To the end of his days he will draw that money. He will also go on peddling tin cans, sweeping-brushes, and peppermints in the same small way. Life henceforth holds nothing for him but this round of small activities. He can never be well off, never live in any but sordid surroundings: but of bare necessaries, of the power of going on living, he is fairly secure. That is what attracts him. He had not much chance of bettering himself, but what chance he had he deliberately sacrifices for the sake of this pitiable security. He has looked life in the face and been frightened of what he saw. He is not of the breed of those who risk their heads in a great race for the hand of Atalanta, however fair the maid may be.

For once in his life he works with real energy and enthusiasm. Day after day for a fortnight he goes round the members of the Committee begging each one of them to vote for him. He collects bushels of testimonials to the excellence of his character. He lies awake at night calculating the promises he has received; how such a one will vote for him from the beginning, such another on the second ballot if Mat Hinds is put out of the running on the first vote. In the end—after a short time of breathless excitement

—he gets the thing he wants. Henceforth he will neither hope much, for there is nothing much to hope for, nor fear much, because he is beyond the reach of the worst terror. He will just go on, writing minutes of meetings, keeping bundles of pale green papers fairly tidy, and renewing from time to time his stock of hardware goods. It is hard to blame Michael Grimes; but the country whose young men are all of his spirit will not be reckoned among the great nations.

For Edward Meares there is less excuse. His father is a doctor in a provincial town, a man who works hard and earns a good income. He is willing to spend money in giving his son a good start in life. He does spend money, for he sends Edward to the university. He can afford the cost of a medical training, but Edward is not to be a doctor. It cannot be said that the boy looks at life squarely and calculates his chances. His father does that for him. The old man looks back, reckons the risks he has run, is appalled when he thinks of them, and thinks that his son should aim at security. The family has not the sort of influence which would secure for Edward a post as dispensary doctor. That would be well enough if it could be got. £120 or £150 a year for certain is something to fall back upon: but it is not to be had. It is true that the profession holds other possibilities. There are great surgeons in Dublin, men who live in fine houses and have knighthoods given them in the end. These are the prize-winners;

but Dr Meares knows how hard these prizes are to win, and how long is the list of those who have fallen out of the race. He is afraid for Edward, with an old man's fear. And Edward, who is a young man, is afraid for himself. His sin, the sin so bitterly deplored by Browning, is

"The unlit lamp and the ungirt loin."

He makes his way through college and obtains with some difficulty a B.A. degree. He is moderately proficient in lawn tennis. He casts his eye on a clerkship in a Government office. There he begins with a salary of £120 a year, a blessed certainty. It will rise by small increments till it reaches £300 a year. He has regular hours, work which is not too arduous, and a position in society of unimpeachable respectability. He has a pension to look forward to in the end. If in the years that follow—the many long years—Edward's soul flutters against the bars, it must flutter in vain. This is his life. He can never become rich, can never see strange lands, or go voyaging in ships over mysterious seas. He will never see his wife, with purple and fine linen on her, walk delicately in splendid places. He has bartered his chances of such things for security.

He could never perhaps have been a man of science. Few men—he is not one of them—have that passionate curiosity which constrains them to question and cross-question Nature, with infinitely patient persist-

ence and ever-eager eyes; spending long vigils at the altar of the goddess, until at last she, the great mother of all mysteries, rewards their love and sacrifice with a word or two of one of her secrets. That kind of life was always beyond Edward Meares; but he might have been a great doctor, and his wife might have gone to the Castle Drawing-rooms as Lady Meares. He learned the wisdom and the fear of age too soon. He would not risk it. He might have gone into a stockbroker's office and learned to gamble. It is a dangerous sport, leading to bankruptcy sometimes, to gaol occasionally; but the gambler has his great moments. Edward will never know what it is to stand in front of a machine which clicks and spits out inch by inch of tape with figures on it, figures which may mean ruin or fortune beyond the dreams of avarice. It is another kind of man who stands with sweat-damped hands but steady eyes to stare at those prices. Edward is not adventurous enough. He gets out of life, instead, a little house in some trim suburb where on Saturdays he mows a lawn, a little unexciting wife, plumply pretty at first, afterwards plumper and plain. She manages things very well for Edward, sends the clothes to the wash carefully counted, and in due time her two babies are big enough to become boy scouts.

Dick Croly, who was in College with Edward, got into a row with the Dublin police, failed to pass several examinations, and went out to Borneo in the end

to gather pepper for an English firm. He died at the age of thirty-five, and Edward pitied him as a man who had made a mess of his life. But before he died Dick had come into some sort of contact with head-hunters. He sent home a skull to his sister. He probably pitied Edward if he thought of him at all.

David M'Niece was also in college with Edward, and he too left without taking a degree. He came from Belfast and had no very high opinion of university culture to start with. He had a very low opinion of it when he left. He went back to Belfast and took his post in the working of his father's mill. When his father died he went in for extending the business. He borrowed money to the very limit of his credit, paying heavily for the accommodation. He made things, things which men actually use. He took the risk of falling markets, faced the danger of unexpected strikes, brought off triumphant profits, or scraped together all his resources to make good crippling losses. He slept uneasily at nights at times of crisis, drank too much, stood balanced more than once on the edges of precipices; but he died a rich man, and they put up a handsome tombstone on his grave with a text of Scripture cut on it. It was an inappropriate text. They ought to have cut this:

"He warmed both hands before the fire of life."

Edward never sees any fire except that which burns pleasantly in his parlour grate on winter evenings.

He toasts the soles of a pair of carpet slippers before it, while his wife mends the holes in the boy's knickerbockers. Edward has done his country's business for it, answering innumerable letters in rounded official phrase. His country has paid him a steady little salary. David has done his own business, and claimed as his reward such loot as he could get and keep. But David has been the more profitable citizen. The country which breeds men of his type has a future before it. The country which only breeds Edward Meares has none.

Why does modern Ireland tend towards the overproduction of men of the minor official kind? Why do so many of us reckon the security of a fixed income the thing to be desired? It is not fair to blame our system of education. It does indeed make for the increase of clerks and shop-assistants. The clever boy wants to go into an office and not a carpenter's shop, prefers standing behind a counter to hammering a horse-shoe. But we have not answered our question by recognising these facts. The seat of our trouble lies deeper. Men of this adventuring kind will find opportunity for adventure anywhere. Men of the other kind will seek security, even if they are fully persuaded of the dignity of labour. To make a boy a boat-builder will not cure him of timidity of soul. He may still prefer to work at a fixed salary for the Congested Districts Board, building or mending nob-

bies, to the risk of trying to build up a business for himself. There is nothing in the work of a draper's assistant to prevent his cherishing the ambition of becoming the Lipton of stockings and blouses. The acquisition of wealth in such ways is not the noblest ambition of the human soul. But it is an ambition, and the man who has it goes adventuring. He takes great risks. He is a free bird of the wild, liable to freeze or starve in winter time, the mark for the sportsman's gun, the plaything of fate with the chances all against him; but he is a finer creature than the domesticated duck, which quacks comfortably round the margin of a muddy pool, and waddles across the yard when the cook scatters his dinner of Indian meal, the dinner he is always sure to get.

The education which makes men carpenters or shop assistants does not give or withhold from them the adventurous spirit. For the causes of its deficiency we must look further. The immense increase of small official posts in recent years has, of course, multiplied the temptations to that kind of life. So they tell us that many public-houses in our streets increase the amount of drinking. But there were monasteries enough in Ireland, secure houses, when St Brendan went a-voyaging. Yet he went, for he had in him the spirit which seeks for the Isles of the Blessed. We, it appears, are losing it, just, I suppose, as the Portuguese lost it when too many of them went

after Vasco da Gama. All the adventurers went, and the new generations were born of those who loved security better than adventuring. Too many of us have gone, and it was always those who hoped most and feared least who went away. Those who were left were those who dreaded risk, and their children are now seeing in the secure small salary of the minor official life's best prize.

CHAPTER THREE
THE POLICEMAN

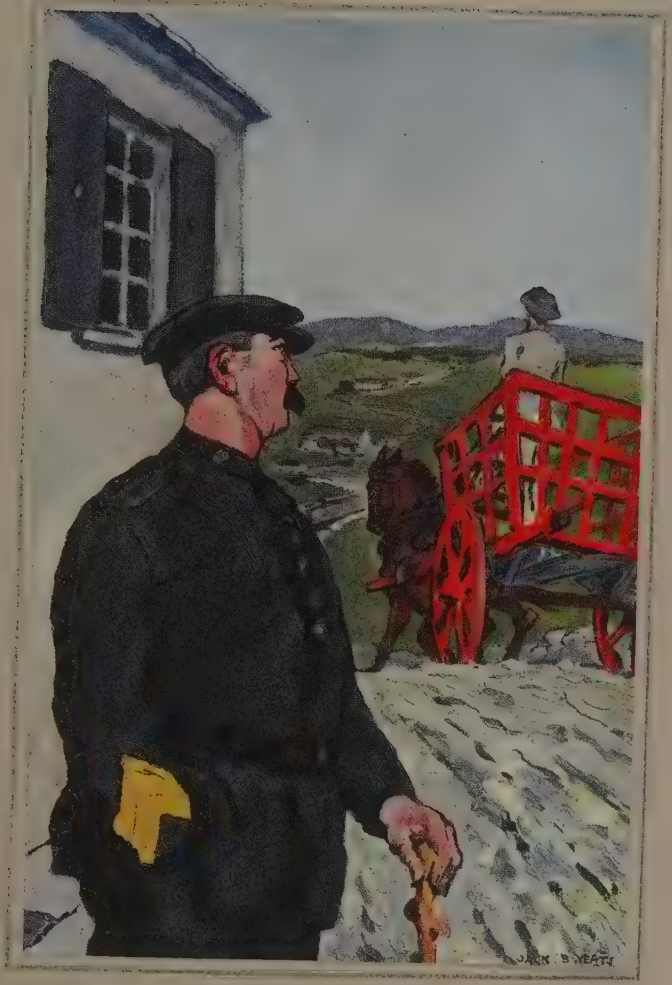
CHAPTER THREE THE POLICEMAN

A HORSE FELL IN THE STREET. IT LAY in the gutter with its head on the kerbstone of the footpath. Everybody who was passing, either up or down the street, stood to look at it. From the houses on each side, men, women, and children came out to see the sight. Very soon the footpath was blocked by the crowd, and the circle of spectators filled half the roadway. From the barrack, which was at the end of the street, a policeman emerged. (One naturally and properly uses a word of Latin derivation in describing the movements of an Irish policeman.) He strolled towards the scene of the disaster, and when he got near enough to be heard without raising his voice, he spoke. "I wonder now," he said, in a quiet, meditative tone, "would it be any use if I was to ask some of yees to move away out of that, so that the people of this town who happen to be wanting to do their legitimate business might be able to get along the street without pushing against yees?"

The people resolved his doubt for him. None of them moved away. The constable himself stood with them and added his advice to that which everybody else was giving to the owner of the horse. If anyone in the town had any legitimate business which required him to pass from one end of that street to the other, he either had to make a detour to avoid the crowd or postpone his business till the horse was on its feet again.

I like that way of dealing with people. It is polite, much more polite than the curt "Move on" of the London policeman. It shows a philosophic attitude of mind towards the law. There is, no doubt, a law in Ireland just as there is in England which forbids the blocking of thoroughfares to the inconvenience of passing people. But a law of that kind ought to be considered with due regard to the spirit which underlies all laws, the securing of the greatest good for the greatest number. The mere hide-bound official treats a law as a kind of divine thing to be enforced just because it is a law, against a whole community. The Irish policeman is a much more philosophic man. He considers before he attempts to enforce a law where the balance of convenience lies. If most of the people in any town want to get rapidly from one end of the street to the other, then the law against blocking the thoroughfare ought to be strictly enforced and loiterers should be made to move on. Any Irish policeman, once convinced that there were really considerable numbers of eager passengers, would enforce the law effectively. If, on the other hand, the majority of the people want to watch the struggles of a fallen horse, and only one or two men wish to move about, the Irish policeman sacrifices the few to the many, refusing to make a fetish of a wretched Act of Parliament.

I could give many examples of this fine philosophic spirit, which distinguishes the members of the Royal



THE POLICE SERGEANT

Irish Constabulary from the police in any other part of the world. One more will perhaps be sufficient. There is a law that motor cars may not go about the roads at more than twenty miles an hour. Compared to many other laws this is quite a good and sensible one. Most people do not own motor cars, and it is pleasant to think that the few who do own them have their proud spirits chastened occasionally by severe fines. But there are times when the general public wants motor cars to go as fast as possible. Any attempt to enforce the law about the speed limit on such occasions is clearly an inconvenient and irritating thing. No Irish policeman would be guilty of it. Some years ago a famous race for motor cars was held on the roads near Dublin. An immense number of people went to see the race, and the traffic on the way to the starting point was a good deal congested. Two policemen were stationed at a rather awkward corner to control and regulate the traffic. They had to deal with horse-drawn vehicles, bicycles, and motor cars. Most of the motor cars went round the corner at considerably more than twenty miles an hour. The two policemen admired them greatly. At last a racing motor came along. It travelled very rapidly indeed, just touching the ground here and there with its wheels, escaping collisions by the most fascinating hair's-breadths. "That fellow," said the eldest policeman, "is the best yet."

He understood the spirit of the modern state. Laws are not divine commands. They are the will of the majority; and it is ridiculous to insist that a majority should obey its own will when it does not want to—ridiculous, because then it no longer is its will. The vast majority of those who go to see a motor race do so because they want to see motor cars travelling fast. No policeman who really understands the nature of law would dream of checking any motor on such an occasion. All Irish policemen understand the nature of law.

And their philosophy goes deeper than that. They understand natural law, the great fundamental instincts which govern human conduct, just as well as they understand the rules which are made by men for their own convenience. It is, for instance, not profitable to grow apples in Ireland. The reason for this is that boys always steal them before they are ripe. The police make no attempt to stop Irish boys stealing apples. It is not certain that they could stop them, even if they tried; though they do things which seem harder. But they do not try. They know that there is a law of nature which compels boys to steal apples. Being wise men, they refuse to spend energy and time in trying to thwart or check a deep-rooted instinct of this kind, just as they would refuse to try to stop water running downhill.

Unkind people, and others not habitually unkind

but irritated by the loss of their apples or favourite plants dug by night from their beds, refuse to recognise the value of the policeman's philosophic outlook upon life. They say that the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary have too good an opinion of themselves and will not perform the proper duties of police because they have come to regard themselves as a military force. I know a lady who speaks very bitterly about the Irish police. She is an enthusiastic gardener, and lives almost under the shadow of a constabulary barrack in which there is a large force of sergeants and men with a very smart District Inspector at the head of them. Every day for some weeks in the early summer of last year those men practised rifle-shooting quite after the manner of real soldiers on a piece of waste land just below the lady's lawn. The sound of the crackling shots ought to have been most consoling to her. She ought to have realised that the men were becoming more and more perfect in the art of hitting things with bullets. She ought to have remembered that there might at any moment be an outbreak of rebels in Tipperary, furious men bent on the destruction of civilisation, or a rising of loyalists in Ulster, equally determined to maintain Law and Order. In either event the security of her family silver, the glass in her windows, even perhaps her life, would depend on the ability with which the police could use their rifles. She ought not to have grumbled

about their daily practice. But every night, when the rifle fire was over, a thief came quietly across the wall at the bottom of the lawn and dug up a plant or two. Sometimes he took a few choice rose-bushes, sometimes half a dozen begonias, sometimes a carnation plant of rare and precious quality. The lady complained of the inefficiency of the police. This was unreasonable. The expert rifleman cannot be expected to catch thieves. Armed men, engaged in holding down a turbulent populace, have more important things to think of than begonias.

But the Irish police are always polite, even to unreasonable women. This lady lodged a formal complaint of the theft of her flowers. For several days afterwards, policemen—those who could be spared from rifle-firing—used to spend an hour or two walking about her garden in full uniform. They were splendid men, tall, muscular, fit to pose as advertisements of any system of physical culture. They ought to have inspired confidence in the lady. They ought to have struck terror to the heart of the thief. They did neither. The thief went on with his nightly depredations. The lady became more and more irritated. The police, though they knew well that the catching of the thief was no business of theirs, continued to be imperturbably polite. With a view to soothing the temper of the lady, a sergeant borrowed a book of detective stories and found out that foot-prints are a

most useful aid in the detection of crime. He examined the flower-beds minutely, and found a large foot-print near the hole from which one of the rose-bushes had been dug up. He warned the lady and her gardener not to obliterate the mark by raking or digging. He said that the man who made it wore boots of size ten, which had no nails in their soles. Then he went back to his rifle-shooting. That night the thief dug up two peonies and left another foot-print which showed plainly that he was still wearing the same pair of boots. The sergeant and two constables consulted together gravely and then gave it as their opinion that the plants must have been taken by someone who wanted plants. The lady—and this shows how bad-tempered women sometimes are—said that she could have guessed that for herself. She also said other things calculated to hurt the feelings of the sergeant. Yet the police bore no grudge against her. If the thief of her flowers came openly, as a self-respecting bandit should, bringing with him armed associates, and made an attack upon her property in good martial style, with drums and banners, the police would march to her assistance without hesitation. They would deploy at the bottom of her lawn, advance in skirmishing order, and open a destructive fire on the bandits, acting with the calm courage of disciplined men. Nothing that the lady ever said about their incompetence in catching thieves would

be remembered against her or allowed to weigh for a moment against the call of duty.

This detachment from all personal feeling is one of the finest things about the Royal Irish Constabulary, and is a clear proof of that philosophic spirit which characterises the whole force. Politicians often abuse the police furiously, calling them "armed ruffians of the Crown," and other opprobrious names. They say that quiet-mannered young men, recent recruits, fresh from the depôt in Dublin, are dangerous debauchees who corrupt the morals of women and sully the purity of Irish homes. No men in the world like having things of this sort said about them, and most men would cherish a grudge against the politicians who say them. But the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary are magnanimous. They are quite ready to act as protectors even of their traducers, when other politicians threaten them with violence. They know that politics cannot be carried on without the use of strong language and that nobody means any harm by what he says.

This splendid impartiality wins the confidence of everyone in Ireland. It was once my lot to spend the night in an hotel in a west of Ireland town while a contested election was raging. Contested elections are, of course, very rare in the west of Ireland, and when there is one everybody makes the best of it. I had, as my fellow-guest in the hotel, one of the

candidates and four of his chief supporters. They sat near me at breakfast and discussed their plans for the day in loud tones. They were, it appeared, going on a forlorn hope that day, holding a meeting in a district notoriously hostile to their party. They were keeping each other's courage up as well as they could, but were plainly nervous. They were going to the place of their meeting by train, and I, as it happened, had to travel to another destination by the same train. We all got into the hotel omnibus together to drive to the railway station; but the omnibus did not start. It stood at the hotel door so long that it began to seem likely that we should miss our train. The candidate and his supporters were naturally impatient. One of them put his head out of the omnibus and called the proprietor of the hotel.

"Why the devil don't we start?" he asked. "We'll be late for the train. Who are we waiting for?"

"You've time enough yet," said the hotel-keeper. "There's a gentleman to go with you."

"We'll wait no more," said the candidate fiercely; "tell the driver to go on. I don't care who the gentleman is, we can't miss our train; drive on."

"It's the inspector of police," said the hotel-keeper, "and he'll be with you in a minute."

The principal supporter of the candidate seized him by the back of his coat and dragged him back into the omnibus.

"It would be better for us," he said, "to miss the train than to be going without him."

I have no doubt that the other candidate and his supporters, the Independent Nationalists—my neighbour being the official Nationalist—would have felt just the same if they had been going to hold a meeting in a place where their supporters were in a minority. The police were prepared to protect either candidate from the other, or, should occasion arise, arrest both of them.

There is, we are told, a church in Jerusalem, in which Turkish soldiers stand on guard to prevent the different kinds of Christians from tearing each other to pieces. The Royal Irish Constabulary occupies a somewhat similar position. The Christians in Jerusalem have, of course, a much better faith than the Turkish soldiers have. All parties in Ireland are enthusiastic for very splendid political principles. The police are like Gallio, impervious to enthusiasm. They block the road of fiery Orangemen, who want to beat drums in a forbidden place, in the same stolidly impartial manner in which they prevent a Nationalist M.P. from addressing his constituents. The majority in each case rages against them. The minority is secretly grateful for their existence.

The Royal Irish Constabulary are under the control of the Central Government. It is the Lord Lieutenant or the Chief Secretary who gives them the or-

ders which they obey. No local authority has any power over them. In England there are dozens of police forces—Liverpool police, Manchester police, and so forth. In Ireland, outside Dublin, there is only the Royal Irish Constabulary. Whenever a Home Rule Bill comes up for discussion in Parliament, there is sure to be trouble over the question of the control of the Royal Irish Constabulary. One party argues that the Imperial Parliament should still keep the police in its own power. The other party maintains that a Home Rule Parliament would not be worth having if it could not give orders to the police. This, though it seems quite natural, is in reality a very curious and interesting example of the topsy-turvy way in which Irish politics develop. Originally the Irish police were under local, Irish control, just as the English police are to-day. The first attempt to turn them into an Imperial force was defeated by the House of Lords, which acted in the interests of what is called "the loyal minority." It was held then to be a dangerous thing to give a Lord Lieutenant or a Chief Secretary control of the police. Now the House of Lords would defeat, if it could, any attempt to place the police under Irish authority. It is held to be a dangerous thing, from the point of view of the same "loyal minority," to take away the control of the police from the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary. The police themselves are probably indiffer-

ent in the matter. They like quelling people who are considered turbulent, and either authority will give them plenty of such work to do. They shrink from the indignity of pursuing petty malefactors, and neither authority is ever likely to insist on their doing that.

The Royal Irish Constabulary is in some respects very like the Irish priesthood. Both bodies are recruited from the people. Both are highly disciplined, and owe allegiance to a distant power. Both are useful in the maintenance of law and order. Both, in order to be useful in this particular way, must keep aloof from common life. In the case of the priesthood this aloofness is secured by the theory of a peculiar sanctity which separates the holder of the office from a common man. With the police no such device is possible, and the Government has fallen back upon another plan. The majesty of the law is, so to speak, embodied in the policeman; just as the mysteries of religion are in the priest. And it is above all things necessary that the majesty of the law should be recognised and respected. Therefore, in the first place, only physically fine men are admitted into the Royal Irish Constabulary. A certain stature is required of recruits, and a chest measurement of many inches. Muscle is developed afterwards by gymnastics and training. This is very wise. Men are more likely to respect law if it appears before them in a well-proportioned body six feet high than if it took visible

shape in a dwarfish hunchback. But mere physical development is not sufficient.

It is not possible to respect the law properly in the person of Tommy Jackson, no matter how tall he is, if you happen to be Tommy's father and to have smacked him when he was young and small. Even for Tommy's cousins and school-fellows, who ran races with him long ago and watched him struggling with the multiplication table, it is very hard to realise that the law when Tommy represents it is really a majestic thing. The governing powers, understanding this, have decreed that no policeman shall serve in his own locality. The recruit from County Donegal is sent to a barrack in Wexford. If, when he is there, he marries a County Wexford young lady, he is immediately sent away to County Kerry, lest his wife's relations, getting to be familiar with him, should come to regard the law as a common thing.

In England no such regulations exist, and a man may be a policeman in the village in which he is born. That is because the law is regarded in England in an entirely different way. The English people love it as a creation of their own, a thing devised by themselves for their own convenience. The more familiar they are with it the better, and no harm can possibly come of intimacy with policemen. The Englishman loves law rather more than less after he has spent the evening smoking with a constable and seen that officer

with his coat unbuttoned and his feet in carpet slippers. The majesty of the law is a force kept in reserve and only used to overawe malefactors. But in Ireland everyone is a potential malefactor. We are not supposed to love the law which was made for us and not by us. It is desirable only that we should fear it. Therefore everything that can be done is done to prevent our coming to regard it as an intimate and familiar thing. The police, though it is not possible to surround them with a halo of mysterious sanctity, are kept as remote as may be from the ordinary life of the people among whom they live.

It is interesting to notice how minutely this policy is worked out in detail. A member of the Liverpool police force wears a uniform during his hours of duty. In his leisure hours he takes off the uniform, plays golf in brown tweed knickerbockers, or tennis in white flannel trousers, a man among his fellow-men. The member of the Royal Irish Constabulary never takes off his uniform except in bed. He may be able to spend an afternoon fishing for trout along the banks of a lonely stream, but even there he must wear his uniform. He may row out on the sea in a boat, but the waves which sprinkle him with salt spray must be taught to recognise that he is a member of a military caste. It is the back of his uniform that they splash against. He lives in a barrack, and if, having married a wife, he gets permission to take a house of his own,

his wife is not allowed to have a lodger. She may have rooms to spare, and the help which a lodger would give towards paying the rent would be valuable. But the majesty of the law must be kept secure. A lodger, sharing to some extent the family life, would become or might become too intimate with the policeman.

But nature is an extraordinarily strong thing. *Expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* The policeman, though he is a philosopher, remains at bottom a man. In spite of the aloofness forced on him, he continues when he can to display little kindly sympathies with the troubles and misfortunes of ordinary life. The wandering cyclist can always get his punctured tyre mended at a police barrack. The Government does not know this; if it did, a regulation would be issued at once forbidding policemen to mend punctured tyres. From such little acts of friendly help sympathy and understanding may spring. It is not possible to regard a constable as a being wholly remote and austere when he has succeeded in wrenching from its rim the tyre over which you bruised your fingers and broke your nails in vain. The man, in spite of his uniform, his philosophy, and his gun, becomes your friend. And no constable, however carefully trained, can kneel beside the overturned bicycle of a hot and dusty damsel without some thrill of human sympathy for her distress.

It is the duty of a constable to arrest particularly

uproarious drunkards and to hale them before the seat of justice. But the constable, being, in spite of regulations, at heart a man, knows how easy and pleasant a thing it is to get drunk, and how galling the fine is which the magistrate imposes. He does not want to arrest drunkards. He will take a great deal of trouble to save a man from reaching the point at which he must be arrested. He will, sometimes, follow a drunkard about the town, endeavouring at each stage of his malady to induce him to go home. He will, when all else fails, soften as far as may be the evidence he gives in court next day. He will not, if he can help it, assert that the prisoner was actually drunk. He will describe him, in a singularly felicitous phrase, as "having drink taken."

The question of the evidence given by police in courts of law is of course a very troubled one. And many people assert roundly that the police are most unreliable witnesses. But all fair-minded men will recognise that on certain occasions law must be vindicated even at the expense of fact, just as there are cases known to all ecclesiastics in which charity is above rubrics. Where the honour of the force is concerned or the policy of the Government involved, the police in giving evidence must have regard for that higher kind of truth which is necessary for the support of order and the vindication of the majesty of the law. We cannot, in Ireland at least, insist on a slavish

fidelity to fact when great principles are at stake. But in all ordinary matters, in dealing with offenders like drunkards who cannot be suspected of politics, the evidence of the police is merciful and the minor malefactor has no reason to complain that his captors fail in human sympathy.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SQUIREEN

CHAPTER FOUR THE SQUIREEN

IT IS A GREAT MANY YEARS NOW SINCE I first heard of Billy Jameson. I did not live in his part of the country in those days, but I happened to be passing through it. The driver of my car—the horse-drawn vehicle called a car in Ireland, for this was long before the days of motors—was a well-informed and talkative man. He gave me information, generally wrong, about all the old castles we passed; and the family history, always accurate, of every gentleman whose house we sighted from the road. Only once did he confess himself to be at a loss. We came upon a stark three-storied house, with a few ragged trees behind it. A short avenue, somewhat grass-grown and untended, led through pasture-land where cattle grazed up to the door of this house. The place was as different as possible from the richly wooded demesnes we had seen before. The house was quite unlike the stately mansions of which we had caught glimpses through their trees. But it in no way resembled the cottages of the farmers. To call it pretentious would be to describe it wrongly. It made no pretences. It stood with almost immodest distinctness for exactly what it was—a rough-cast, ugly, uncompromising building, defiant of the four winds of heaven, indifferent to the seductive beauty of flower gardens, trim lawns, and pleasant sheltered arbours.

"Now, who," I asked, "lives there?"

My car-driver scratched his head.

"I disremember his name this minute," he said, "but he's the gentleman they didn't shoot in the bad times."

I turned in my seat and stared at the man. His description of the owner of the house, of Billy Jameson, —for I found out his name afterwards—was suggestive of horrible carnage. In the course of three days' driving we had, as I have suggested, passed the houses of many gentlemen. Had they all been killed? Was this man the sole survivor of an entire generation? And, if so, why had he alone been spared? I asked another question:

"Was he very popular with the people?"

"Popular, is it? No, but the boys that was in the League them times hated him worse than they hated the devil."

"And yet they didn't shoot him?"

"It wasn't for want of trying, then. If they blazed at him once they blazed at him twenty times. But they couldn't hit him. It might have been that," he added thoughtfully, "that made him so unpopular in the latter end."

I can understand the feeling. It must be desperately annoying to waste powder and shot night after night and have nothing to show for it. I myself have had the same sense of personal resentment against a snipe which somehow escaped both my barrels, and

no snipe that I have ever met waited to let me have eighteen more tries at it. If a bird did such a thing, and I went on missing it, I should share the feeling of "the boys that were in the League them times." I should hate that bird worse than I hate the devil. I also began to understand my driver's way of describing the owner of the stark house. He was not, literally, the only gentleman they did not shoot in the bad times. He was the gentleman, of all those they shot at, who escaped oftenest. I remember reading about a certain Mr Carden, who lived in County Tipperary, and survived an earlier land agitation. He was known among his friends as "Woodcock Carden" because he had been the mark of so many sportsmen's guns. Apparently Mr Billy Jameson might have been called Woodcock, Grouse, or Hare Jameson for the same reason. He never got any such name, but he was known as "the gentleman they didn't shoot in the bad times."

Billy Jameson is not—so one gathers from his house—a *grand seigneur*. He never owned a vast number of acres, or in the best of times boasted a nominal rent-roll of thousands of pounds a year. But he had a small property. Half of it, or thereabouts, he farmed himself. The other half was let out in tiny patches to some eight or ten poverty-stricken tenants, who lived huddled together in an exceedingly dirty village, and tied the thatch on their cabins with ropes. They paid

very little rent. I have always wondered how they managed to pay any at all. Their holdings were an open defiance of the laws of political economy. They were many grades below the "margin of cultivation," yet they were cultivated. When the Congested Districts Board took over the whole estate, thereby enraging Billy Jameson, the way in which the land was divided among the people became a standing joke. No man's holding was in less than half a dozen different patches of most irregular shapes and sizes. For a hundred years or so these tenants of the Jamesons had been marrying each other, and at each marriage a little bit of land changed hands. When Doherty's son married O'Flaherty's daughter, O'Flaherty handed over three roods of his meadow by way of a dowry for the girl, and Doherty's son built a wall round the patch. When later on Miss Doherty was married to the eldest son of O'Flaherty, Doherty cut his potato garden in half, and O'Flaherty's son built a stone wall round the half that he got with the girl. Neither Billy Jameson nor his ancestors attempted to interfere with these dividings and subdividings. Stones were easily come by for the walls, and the business had been going on for over a hundred years. It was generally reported that the first two officials of the Congested Districts Board who went to work on the Jameson estate are now in a lunatic asylum. But this may not be true. I asked Billy Jameson once if there

was any truth in the report. He was drinking whisky-and-water at the time, and I thought he might have been communicative.

"It wouldn't surprise me," he said, "if all those fellows ended their days in asylums. It's where they ought to be, the most of them, and the rest in gaol."

It seems an odd thing, but Billy Jameson feels more bitterly about the altogether benevolent officials of the Congested Districts Board than he ever did about his tenants and their friends when they tried to shoot him. "Murdering devils," he called them, but he always spoke the words in a kindly tone. On one occasion they shot at him when he was crossing a field at the back of his own house. He was under police protection at the time, and two constables were walking after him. It was broad daylight, as broad as daylight ever is in winter in the west of Ireland, and the shooting party was lurking in a ditch. At the sound of the first shot Billy Jameson stopped dead.

"Who's shooting here?" he said. "Nobody has a right to shoot on my land. I haven't given permission to——"

Another shot followed. The two constables did not want to be hit, even by accident, and they began to think they might be.

"Run, sir, run," they cried. "It's you they're shooting at."

Billy Jameson looked across at the ditch, and then

scratched his cheek thoughtfully.

"It's you they're shooting at," said the constables.

"Well, now," said Billy, "aren't these fellows the very divil!"

He never spoke in that friendly way about the Congested Districts Board. Yet it was Billy Jameson and men of his class who bore the brunt of the shooting. The greater landlords for the most part retired to London and refused to be intimidated by the shooting of their agents. Billy Jameson could not have afforded to live in London, and, if he could, would have been exceedingly uncomfortable there.

The bad times are long past now, and Billy Jameson has grown to be an old man. I should like to have known him in the heyday of his strength and vigour, but the chance was denied me. I met him first some fifteen or twenty years ago. We were in the middle of a famine at the time, one of those famines which used to occur regularly in the old days and have left their marks all over the west of Ireland in the form of singularly useless roads built for the purpose of giving employment. The famine which was the occasion of my meeting Billy Jameson was one of the last of the series. It was, I think, actually the last famine on a large scale which we ever organised. There was a central relief fund, and the money used to be sent down from Dublin to local committees to administer. The theory, I think, was that a

local committee was sure to know how to spend the money to the best advantage. The people in each district elected the local committee. The parish priest was always a member. The Church of Ireland rector was also a member. This showed there was no kind of religious intolerance in the neighbourhood. The dispensary doctor was a member. So were any landlords or land agents who might happen to be there; which showed that the funds would be administered in a non-political spirit. If there were any shopkeepers in the parish they were elected. There would have been farmers too, but they would not act on the committees because they all hoped to get a share of what was going in the way of relief.

As a rule the two clergymen were the only people who attended the meetings. The other members of the committee were purely ornamental. But Billy Jameson was a man with a good deal of public spirit, and he liked to have a voice in anything that was going on if he could.

He attended the first meeting of the committee to which he belonged. It was held in a schoolhouse after the children had gone home. I happened to be passing the door of the school on my tricycle. In those days we rode tricycles because the original kind of bicycle was horribly dangerous. Billy Jameson caught sight of me through the window. He came to the door and shouted at me.

"Come in here for a minute," he said; "we want you to help us."

I did not, as I have mentioned, know Billy Jameson then. I thought he might be the schoolmaster and that he wanted my help in thrashing unruly boys. I stopped at once and went into the schoolroom. I never was more surprised in my life than when I saw the two clergymen sitting one at each end of the table looking puzzled and annoyed.

"Listen to me, now," said Billy, addressing me. "You're a man of high principle and independent character." I am; but I did not see how Billy could have known these things, unless he was a man of remarkable skill in reading faces.

"So I want you to agree with me," said Billy, "and to persuade these two clergymen to do what's right. We've a matter of £10 sent down here for distribution in this locality."

"Among the poor," said the priest.

"In relief of distress," said the rector.

"Now what I say is this," said Billy: "instead of wasting the money on Indian meal and seed potatoes for fellows who won't say thank you whatever you give them, and raising all sorts of ill-feeling among the rest of the people when it's discovered that there isn't enough to go round—you agree with me so far?"

He had not, so far, made a statement of any kind, so I said I did not disagree with him.

"There you are, now," said Billy to the two clergymen.

But they evidently did not agree with him. They both said they could not and would not do such a thing.

"The money," said Billy, "will be well spent, if each of these two reverend gentlemen gets himself a new topcoat."

It was a miserably cold day, and both clergymen seemed to me, when I looked at them carefully, to be insufficiently clad. If only they had stayed at home and allowed Billy to manage the business of the committee single-handed the thing might have been done and no one's conscience would have been any the worse. Billy Jameson has a hardy conscience, very difficult to injure. But of course I saw the difficulty of the two clergymen, and I gave judgment against Billy. He did not resent my desertion of his side. He took me by the arm in the friendliest way.

"Good-bye, gentlemen," he said, turning to the committee, "settle it any way you like, but I'm not going to sit here all day in a draught catching rheumatism."

He led me from the schoolroom.

"Come on, now," he said; "it's not half a mile to my house, and I'll give you a drop of something that'll warm you."

Billy is a bachelor. His home is managed by an

elderly woman who calls to her aid from time to time bare-footed damsels from the neighbouring cottages. My first impression of Billy's house was that it was extraordinarily dirty; my next, that it was exceedingly comfortable. The theory that dirt interferes with either comfort or health is, after all, a mere convention. Look at the pig in his stye. Is any animal more supremely comfortable than he is when he lies on his side and breathes heavily? Do orphans in institutions —the cleanest places in the world—enjoy anything like his splendid health? Directly I got over the unworthy fear that the soil on the seat of Billy's armchair would stick to my clothes, I found myself most comfortable.

A huge turf fire burnt on the hearth. There was a soft mat underfoot. Billy fetched from a cupboard a square cut-glass decanter of whisky with a silver label round its neck. A bare-footed girl, pursued by the voice of Billy's housekeeper, came panting in with tumblers, a sugar-bowl, and a kettle of hot water. The afternoon darkened rapidly. Billy told me a great many things about the breeding and training of horses.

Afterwards I came to know the house better. The dirt of most of the things in it ceased to make any impression on me. The excellent food which Billy's housekeeper managed to serve from her grimy and most inconvenient kitchen never failed to surprise me. The dinners she sent up were never elegant, but they

were invariably good to eat. I also discovered, being in a small way an amateur in such things, that Billy had some very good furniture for which he cared nothing at all. There was, for instance, a bureau at which he habitually wrote his letters. It was a little battered, but was unmistakably a fine specimen of English cabinet-maker's work, dating from the time of Sheraton. I spoke to Billy about it once, but he seemed entirely indifferent to its beauty or its value. His father, so he told me, had picked it up at some auction or other. It struck him as a highly inconvenient kind of writing-desk. There were other things, tucked away in odd corners, despised by Billy himself, bumped and bruised by one after another of his bare-footed housemaids, all of them acquired in the same haphazard manner. When Billy, or any of his ancestors, felt in need of a piece of furniture of any kind, he bought it second-hand at an auction, waiting with perfect patience for an opportunity. The plan appealed to them in two ways. They all liked the feeling that they were getting bargains, and they all disliked going to Dublin and buying in large shops. Sometimes they did secure bargains which would make the mouth of a collector water. Sometimes they bought the veriest rubbish at prices far above the market value. They were quite as well content in the latter case as in the former. Billy looked upon a chest of drawers as a thing which held clothes in a more or less convenient way.

If it held clothes, and the handles did not come off when you pulled them, it was, in Billy's opinion, a good chest of drawers. He would have thought no less of it if you proved that it came out of the factory of one of the firms which cater for young couples furnishing their villas on the three-years system. He would have thought no more of it if you could have traced its history straight back to the workshop of Chippendale himself. Some day there will be an auction in Billy Jameson's house. He is nearly seventy years old now, and has no visible relations. Then, I hope, there will be bargains going. But the Dublin furniture-dealers in these days are extraordinarily knowing. They may have heard of Billy's treasures.

There is just one piece of his furniture of which Billy is inordinately proud, and his delight in boasting about it brought to my notice a curious side of his character. It was an old barometer which hung in the hall. Billy said that his grandfather or his great-grandfather, he was not sure which, had bought it, and that it was the first barometer ever seen west of the Shannon. It bore witness to the fact that the Jamesons had been great people once in the neighbourhood, pioneers in the arts of life, leaders in the march towards civilisation. They had dropped out of the race, and Billy himself had sunk to the position, indeterminate, undefinable, of a squireen. Lord Allington, our social leader, nodded to Billy when he met

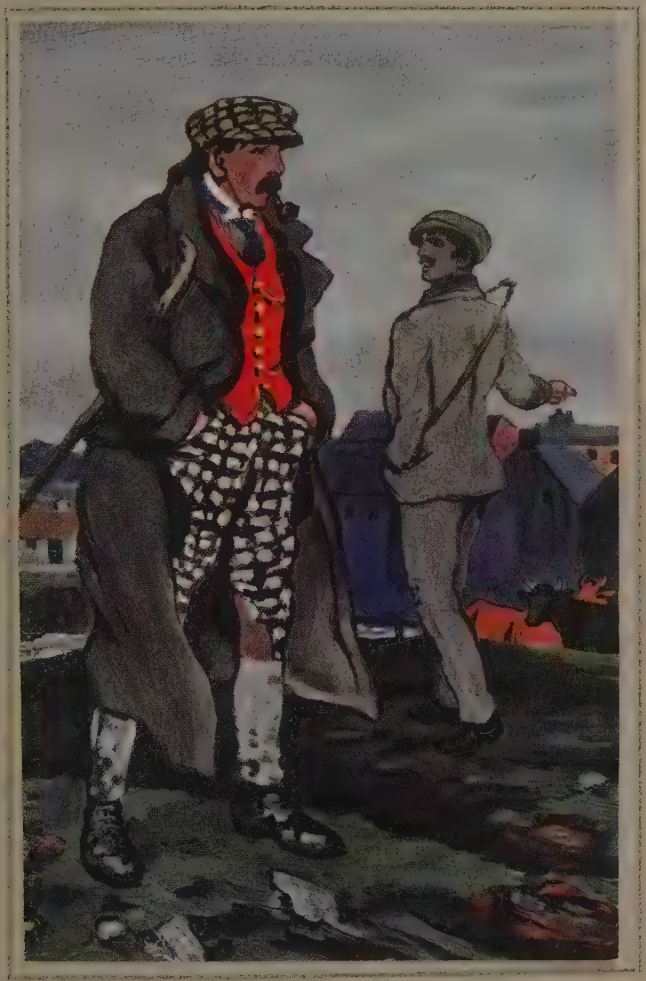
him on the road, but did not ask him to dinner. Billy spoke of that nobleman by his Christian name, abbreviated, and told stories of the first lord's gaucherie in the hunting-field. In the days when the barometer first crossed the Shannon the Allingtons kept a shop in Athlone. But Billy was not in the very least a snob. He did not want to dine with the Allingtons. He took no special pleasure in thinking that the Allingtons would once, long ago, have been proud to dine in his house. Such things did not affect him either one way or the other; but he cherished the barometer and loved to think that it was the first of its kind in the country.

Billy had, on occasions, the manners of a very courtly gentleman. I was once standing by when he was introduced to a lady. Ladies came very little into Billy's ordinary life, and I should have supposed that he would have felt and shown some awkwardness in being suddenly introduced to one—and this one, besides being very fashionably dressed, was sitting in a motor car. But Billy was fully equal to the occasion. He took off his weather-beaten hat with an air of respectful deference to the sex, a deference seldom seen nowadays. His wrinkled old face, ill-shaved about the chin, had a charming smile on it. He took the neatly gloved hand which was offered him in his grimy paw, and I am not sure that he did not squeeze it a little, affectionately. He certainly

held it much longer than is usual on such occasions. The lady told me afterwards that she thought Billy a "sweet old dear." I never got Billy's opinion about her. It was contrary to his code of behaviour to talk casually about women.

On other occasions Billy can suit his manners to those of company of a very different kind. He breeds, rears, and sells cattle, and it is startling to hear him bargaining with a jobber over the price of his beasts. I have a very vivid mental picture of old Billy at a fair. His frieze coat is rain-sodden. He is splashed with mud from his ankles to his collar. The water streams from the brim of his hat when he nods his head. Behind him, in charge of a herd, are some ten or twelve shaggy, steaming bullocks. Beside him, large-paunched and pallid, is the jobber who wants to buy. Billy is giving this man an idea of what he thinks of him—necessarily a confused and dim idea, because Billy's language is far-fetched and rare in quality. Even a cattle-jobber cannot take in at one hearing the full meaning of the things which Billy says. I, who am far indeed from being an expert in blasphemy, often think over his phrases for days after hearing them, and find myself wondering at last what awful insult they conveyed.

But cattle-dealing is not Billy's main interest in life. In his heart he despises bullocks, though he consents to make money by them when he can. It is the



THE SQUIRE.

horse, noblest of quadrupeds, to which his heart is given. Horses bred by Billy have taken high places in local shows, and more than once have distinguished themselves in the jumping competitions in Dublin, which are the greatest of all tests of horses and horsemanship. There is a brood mare of his, Semiramis II.—I often wondered where Billy got the name—which was twice highly commended in the Dublin show. Of these creatures—and there must have been many hundreds of them—Billy will tell stories all night to anyone who will listen. I have heard most of the stories, I suppose, but there is one which I love above all the rest. It concerns a horse called Gallantry, a chestnut, with a white stocking on his off fore leg. Gallantry was bred for a hunter, but turned out to have a turn for speed, and once came in first in a steeplechase. Then something went wrong with him and he disappeared.

Years afterwards Billy paid his one and only visit to London. He arrived there, as Irish travellers do, in the very early morning. It was winter time, and the dawn had not yet struggled into Euston Station. A porter, carrying Billy's disgraceful portmanteau, led the way to a hansom cab. Billy, instead of getting into the vehicle and telling the driver where to go to, walked to the horse's head and began patting it. The creature nuzzled Billy's waistcoat. Billy felt down his legs, while the cabman stared at him, and

addressed the creature affectionately as "Gallantry, old boy." It was an odd meeting for man and horse. I like to think of the parting of the two, the colt and Billy, among the stone walls over which Gallantry had been schooled in the clean moist air of Connacht, and their meeting again, with sudden recognition, amid the roar and confusion of Euston Station, at six o'clock in the morning.

Billy has one other story, and only one, which he tells about that visit to London. He stayed with friends who lived somewhere near Primrose Hill, and they gave him boiled eggs for breakfast. Billy disapproved of the eggs, but was much too well mannered to say so. He wrote to his housekeeper, telling her to send him by post twelve absolutely fresh eggs, buttered while still warm. These he presented to his hostess, and she had some of them boiled for breakfast. Billy, smiling with pleasurable anticipation, awaited expressions of delight from people who for the first time in their lives were eating a fresh egg. He was disappointed.

"Your Irish eggs," said his hostess, "don't seem to me to have much flavour, not nearly as much as those we get in London."

It is, I think, largely on this experience that Billy's contempt for all town-dwellers is based. People who actually prefer highly flavoured eggs seem to him, and always will seem, much degraded. Nor can he

understand the naïve wonder these friends of his expressed at his recognition of Gallantry between the shafts of the cab. Billy never went back to see them. I do not remember that they ever paid him a visit in his house.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE POLITICIAN

CHAPTER FIVE THE POLITICIAN

TIMOTHY SWEENY IS A GREAT MAN now. He is a member of Parliament and gets £400 a year for that. He is also, so we understand, connected in some way with the industry of company-promoting, and his friends are of opinion that he ought to be making a good thing out of that. Timothy was always exceedingly shrewd, and we do not think that London financiers are likely to get the better of him. He is also, so he gives us to understand, familiar with the gayer side of London life. He does not say very much about this when he comes home, but he occasionally lets slip, casually, the name of some brand of champagne, mentioning it as a common sort of drink, and I have heard him speak of famous dancers as if he knew them well. But we do not grudge Timothy his greatness. After all, it was we who gave it to him when we chose him to be our representative, and we chose him because he thoroughly deserved to be a member of Parliament.

Timothy is not in the least ungrateful. He would share a bottle of champagne with us if he succeeded in bringing one home. He would put us on to a good thing in the City if good things of that kind were any use to us. They are not, because most of us have no money, and those who have prefer to leave it on deposit receipt in the local bank, feeling sure that it is tolerably safe there. Timothy presides at any meeting which we happen to get up, and is always ready

to make a speech for us. It is very pleasant to hear from his lips that he holds the Government in the hollow of his hand, and that we shall have Home Rule before we sing "Auld Lang Syne" over the departing ghost of the year 1914. Timothy's greatness, like the fur coat which he brought home with him last Christmas, sits gracefully on him, and we none of us grudge him his advancement.

All this is very much to the credit of Timothy Sweeny. Many of our greatest men have sprung from very humble origins, but comparatively few of them, so we understand, care to recognise their earlier acquaintances. Timothy is not like that. When we sent a deputation of our Urban District Council over to London two years ago to interview some great man or other about a plan we had for draining a lake, Timothy treated the members of the deputation in the most hospitable way. He showed them all over the House of Commons, and when the long walk had made them thirsty he gave them drinks in the smoking room, a most gorgeous apartment with a funny little arrangement fixed on the wall, something like the advertisements of Bovril to be seen at night in Dublin, which told you who was making a speech at the time and how long he'd been at it. Finnegan, who was at that time the Chairman of our Urban District Council, wanted Timothy to go away and make a speech so that his friends and admirers might

see the name of their fellow-townsman displayed in shining letters. But Timothy would not go. He explained that the Irish Party did not just then want to embarrass the Government. All speech-making, it seems, is embarrassing. It wastes time, which might be better spent in voting.

Timothy Sweeny began life in a cottage. He was the fourth son of a small farmer who was up to his neck in debt. This fact had an important influence on Timothy's career. Old Sweeny owed a great deal to one of our local merchants, a gentleman who dealt in flour, porter, seeds, and artificial manures. His shop was also a public-house, and he occasionally lent actual cash to his customers as well as allowing them to run up large bills. He claimed to be one of the benefactors of the parish—justly, I think, because without his help many of the farmers would have starved. The elder Sweeny, in part satisfaction of his debt, bound Timothy as a kind of apprentice to this merchant, the understanding being that Timothy was to receive no wages for eight years. Timothy was at that time sixteen years of age. He served faithfully till he was twenty-three. Then, within a year of the end of the apprenticeship, the merchant died. Timothy married his widow.

This was a very good thing for the widow, for Timothy by that time had thoroughly mastered the business, and it is not everyone who understands

that kind of business. The system of calculating the interest to be charged on overdue accounts would be puzzling to an ordinary financier. In order to avoid troublesome sums with decimals and percentages in them, the merchant goes over his books once a month or so and adds half a crown or five shillings to the sum entered as due by every customer. A man might be a long time in a Dublin bank without learning to do that; and no one who could not do it would have been much use to the widow as a husband. In later years Timothy's knowledge of business was of great use to him and the cause of Irish Nationalism. He was better able than any other member of the party to appreciate the mischief which Sir Horace Plunkett and his band of co-operators were doing to the merchants of Ireland. The strong stand made by the party against the new economics was very largely due to the influence of Timothy Sweeny.

A less ambitious man might have rested content with the position which Timothy had achieved. He was one of the leading merchants in the town, had a good house and a wife very little over fifty years of age who was seldom actually drunk during the day. But Timothy was born for real greatness. He conceived the idea of extending his business at the expense of other merchants in the town. His plan, I think, was to attract all the customers there were into his shop and leave none for anybody else. He

realised at once that advertising, besides being expensive, is a futile thing. What is the good of placarding the county with statements that your seeds and manure are better than any others, when the man next door is saying exactly the same thing about his seeds and manure? Timothy's plan was to become a champion of the people's rights, and to rely on the men whose battles he fought to reward him by dealing at his shop. He took up politics.

At that time our local branch of the League was in a moribund condition. It had only about twenty members, and none of them paid their subscriptions. It was almost impossible to get more than two or three of them to attend the regular weekly meetings on Sunday afternoons. Timothy changed all that. He had a natural taste for oratory, and his speeches, which were always reported in our paper, began to attract public attention. The attendance at the weekly meeting of the League increased rapidly. Timothy proved himself to be a man of action as well as words. He revived the good old custom of boycotting objectionable people; and did his best to persuade members of the League that the other seed and manure merchants were, on purely patriotic grounds, the most objectionable people there are. He was not altogether successful, because the other merchants also had their debtors, and a debtor feels that there is a certain awkwardness about boycotting the man to

whom he owes money. Timothy turned his attention to our landlord. There is, of course, no use in boycotting a landlord. He simply gets what he wants from Dublin and laughs at you. But you can get at a landlord by persuading his tenants not to pay any rent. Timothy became exceedingly popular with the farmers. Unfortunately, his business was not much the better for his popularity. He had to devote so much time to politics that he could not give his shop the attention it required. Everybody cheered him, and his speeches were very fully reported, but the other merchants did a larger business at his expense.

The crisis of the agitation was reached when the landlord, acting after prolonged legal proceedings, seized two cows belonging to a man who owed nine years' rent. It was proposed to auction these cows. The League, of which Timothy was the President, passed a resolution declaring that anyone who bid for the cows was an enemy of his country. The day of the auction arrived. Timothy and some thirty of the leading members of the League were present to see that nobody did bid. A large number of police were there to protect the auctioneer and the cows. The landlord's bailiff—Timothy afterwards described him as an "emissary of the tyrant"—bought the cows. The waiting Leaguers expressed their detestation of his action with boos and groans. Timothy

—who was behind a wall and therefore felt fairly safe —threw a stone and hit a policeman on his helmet. The policeman, who was young and active, sprang over the wall and reached Timothy before he had time to run away. Timothy lay down on the ground and stretched up his arms and legs. This was probably the best thing he could do. Accounts differ about what happened next. Timothy says that the policeman struck him a violent blow on the head with his baton. The policeman says that Timothy rolled over, and in doing so struck his nose against a stone. At all events, Timothy's nose bled. There is no doubt about that.

A sympathetic crowd followed Timothy from the ground where the auction took place, to the market square of the town, where there is a pump. Timothy's nose bled the whole way. At the pump Timothy washed his face. He had no pocket-handkerchief, so his face needed washing badly. He washed it with his hands, and the crowd, a large one, watched him in silence. Timothy, who had the instinct for effect possessed by all great men, held up his dripping hands and turned his face, then rather streaky, to his admirers. "This," he said, "is the blood which I have shed for Ireland!"

It was then, I think, that we first began to realise that Timothy Sweeny would make a good member of Parliament. But the time for conferring that hon-

our upon him was still far off. We had a member, and although he had never shed any blood for Ireland, he showed no sign of resigning. We did the next best thing. We elected Timothy a delegate on all occasions on which delegates were required, and we sent him—at his own expense—to attend every convention and meeting which has delegates at it. Travelling up and down to Dublin, where the important meetings are all held, costs a great deal, and of course a man when in Dublin has to live in a style very superior to that which is usual in a town like ours. Timothy did not yet begin to drink champagne. But even whiskies-and-sodas run to a good deal of money, if you drink them freely at all hours for several days. It is also difficult to manage a business in a provincial town if you are spending a week every now and then a hundred miles away from it and are much occupied in political affairs at home. The business suffered severely.

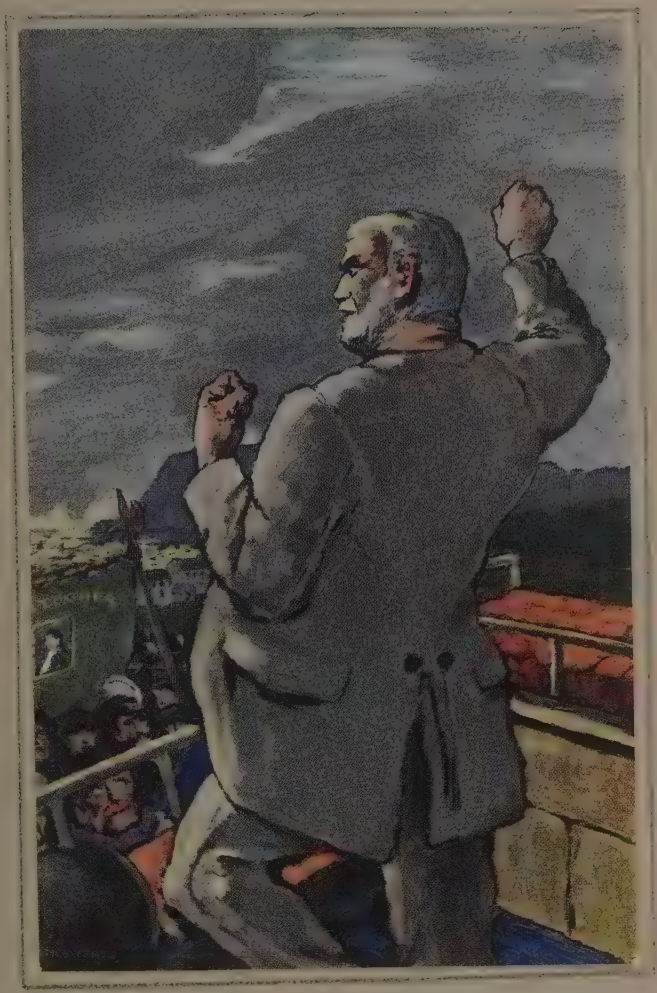
A year after Timothy shed his blood for Ireland his wife died. Timothy gave her a first-rate funeral and one of the handsomest coffins I have ever seen. He put a notice in the Dublin papers to say that there were to be "No flowers. By request." We could not have brought flowers in any case, because it was the month of January and there are no flowers in Ireland then. But the notice looked well, and everybody agreed that Timothy had paid all possible respect to

the memory of the deceased. I do not think he regretted her very much at first, though he did later on. The business went from bad to worse after her death, and it gradually became clear that it was she and not Timothy who had kept the shop going. Timothy's popularity in the town and neighbourhood increased rather than diminished with his business losses. The farmers liked him much more when they owed him less, and the other merchants appreciated him as a politician when they found that he was not a serious business rival. He was a great favourite with the clergy. He subscribed with astonishing liberality to every kind of fund, and never asked what became of his money. He invariably rounded off his speeches with some reference to the indissoluble alliance between the priests and people of Ireland, or an allusion to the love of faith and fatherland as the motive power behind all political action. He also said he was learning the Irish language, and had his name painted up over his shop in very quaint letters, and spelled in such a way that nobody recognised it as Sweeny. This encouraged the idea that he was a patriot of the finest kind.

Eighteen months after Mrs Sweeny's death—Timothy's financial position being at the time about desperate—there was a fire in his shop. We got out the town fire-engine and filled it with water at the river—a very difficult thing to do because there was very little

water in the river just then, and we had to scoop it up in buckets, getting no more than a quarter of a bucketful at each scoop. By the time we had the engine full and had dragged it up the street the fire had taken firm hold on the premises. We pumped water through the shop window, but it did very little good. The hose attached to the fire-engine was leaking in two places, and it did not seem possible to work up much force with the pump. Timothy was fully, very fully, insured. He had, fortunately, added considerably to the amount of his policy a couple of months before the fire took place. Nothing could have been in worse taste than the behaviour of the insurance company. Considering that Timothy was a leading politician and by far the most popular man in the town, the company ought to have paid up at once and asked no questions. Those companies have plenty of money, and the £700 for which Timothy's shop was insured would have been nothing to any of them.

But this company not only asked questions, but encouraged their local agent to drop offensive hints about legal proceedings if Timothy persisted in his claim. Of course, this was only bluff, and Timothy swore that he would, if necessary, see the matter through all the courts in the land, up to the House of Lords. He said it was a public duty to prevent the company breaking its contract with the public. In the end he compromised, accepting £150 in full satis-



THE POLITICIAN

faction of his claim. This proved to be the end of Timothy's career as a business man. The shop was never reopened. For a time Timothy seemed even to have deserted politics. He made no speeches and did not attend the meetings of the League. He used to walk about the streets in a quiet suit of dark grey clothes, and occasionally, once a fortnight or so, wrote an article in the local paper on the subject of State Insurance. None of us read the articles, because the subject was one which did not interest us. We had not at that time the slightest intention of buying useless stamps to stick on silly cards, and we understood that Acts of Parliament of this sort are not meant to apply to the West of Ireland. We wondered, vaguely, why Timothy wrote the articles, and an opinion began to gain ground that his mind had suffered in consequence of the scandalous way the insurance company treated him.

We soon found out that Timothy was not such a fool as we thought he was. There were several nice posts going under the Insurance Act, posts which carried salaries of a comfortable kind. Timothy had his eye on one of them. When the time came for making the appointments Timothy went up to Dublin every week. He had letters speaking highly of his character and ability from everybody in the place, from the parish priest down to the humblest J.P. Indeed, he had testimonials signed by men who had no

letters of any kind to put after their names. We all made sure that he would get the post he wanted. He ought to have got it. If appointments were made, as they surely should be made in a democratic state, in recognition of local popularity, that is to say, in accordance with the will of the people, Timothy would have had his for certain. If posts were even given as rewards for past services to the country nobody could have kept Timothy out. But our present system of government is rotten. Fellows up in Dublin, who do not know the needs of the locality, and do not care a pin for the opinions of the people, give everything that is going to their own friends.

Timothy was greatly disappointed, and his friends were furious. We made up our minds that if ever our opportunity came we would teach the Dublin wire-pullers and party bosses a lesson that would do them good. Our opportunity did come with the General Election. It was taken for granted at headquarters that we would re-elect our old member. We made up our minds to give the job to Timothy. It was a much better job than the one under the Insurance Act which he had missed, and we did not see why we should not give it to a man whom we knew well and respected. They sent a young fellow down from Dublin to talk to us, and we let him talk. He said a lot about loyalty to the party, and the damnable nature of faction. That sort of thing is all right in a speech,

of course, and we cheered him; but we were not out for speeches just then. We were doing business. £400 a year is business, and there is no good in mixing it up with politics. He saw that when we put it to him, for he was an intelligent young fellow enough; but he went on talking. He said that a contest in the constituency would be horribly expensive, that the party couldn't afford it very well, and that he was sure that we could not afford it at all. We told him that we did not intend to have a contest. We intended to nominate Timothy Sweeny and let the matter end there. I must say for that young fellow that he did his best. He said some very fine things about the need of unity against the common foe, the victory of the cause of Home Rule, and how we had it safe if only we stood firm. But we were not going to be moved from our determination by that kind of talk. We told him plainly that while we were all in favour of Home Rule, national independence, the land for the people, and faith and fatherland, the thing we wanted most was to make Timothy Sweeny a member of Parliament.

He gave in to us at last. We knew he would have to in the end, and when he did we made things as easy for him as we could. We said that Timothy was just as good a Home Ruler as the best of them, that he would sign any pledge or swear any oath that was required of him. We promised that we would make

it our business to see that Timothy attended to his duties and voted whatever way he was told to vote. We undertook to make a house-to-house collection in aid of the party funds, and we signed a letter in which we said that the leaders of the Irish race at home and abroad might always calculate on our unfaltering loyalty.

When the day came Timothy Sweeny, in the absence of any other candidate, was declared member for our division of the county. We lit a number of bonfires in the evening, and the town band played "God Save Ireland" thirty-four times, besides several other tunes. Timothy made the most eloquent speech we ever heard from him, saying that we had conferred on him an honour of which Julius Cæsar, Wolfe Tone, or any other hero of antiquity would have been proud—which may have been true,—and that he himself would do his best to retain the good opinion we had of him and to deserve a continuance of our favour. This certainly was true. Nobody doubted it. It would be a very queer thing if a man did not do his best to retain £400 a year.

From that day on we saw less of Timothy Sweeny. I never could make out that he had very much to do over in London, but he had to live there most of his time. He associated with all sorts of grand people, especially with English Liberal members of Parliament. One result of keeping this high company was

that Timothy's manners became very genteel. He did not, indeed, become too genteel for his old friends. When Parliament was not sitting and he was able to spend some weeks at home, he associated with us all without making us feel that he had become too grand for us. In fact, he gradually improved our manners. We all felt that we ought to try to live up to Timothy Sweeny, and Finnegan, who was editor of our paper as well as Chairman of the Urban District Council, took to late dinner—as late, that is to say, as his wife would cook it for him. She never could be persuaded to go beyond five o'clock in the afternoon; but even that was a great advance. Before Timothy told us about the customs of London people, Finnegan dined at one.

Another effect which his new life had on Timothy was to diminish his respect for the priests. He goes to mass, of course, when he is at home, and he still subscribes generously whenever subscriptions are wanted; but he has a way, without saying much, of giving us the impression that priests are not nearly so important as we think they are. I can recollect seeing him smile in a very superior way once when Mrs Finnegan, the editor's wife, said that it is not lucky to go against what a priest might say. I have seen Americans, returned Yanks, as we call them, smiling in much the same manner. But I do not think that either they or Timothy mean much by it. I am

quite sure that it would not be lucky for Timothy if he went against the priests in any matter of importance, and he has far too much sense to try the experiment.

There was some talk a little while ago of Timothy marrying again. I happened to be a friend of the young lady whose name was mentioned along with his, so I took the opportunity of speaking to him on the subject one day. Timothy told me there was nothing in the talk. He said that the girl's fortune—she had a pretty good fortune—did not seem so big to him then as it would have seemed before he was a member of Parliament, and that, any way, he would want a different kind of girl if he wanted one at all, but he was not sure that he did.

"The way of it is this," he said. "If we get a Parliament in College Green—and I think we're pretty sure of that now—I might be going in for a position in the Cabinet. I don't say for certain that I'd get it, but I've been studying up the subject of Education, and I don't mind telling you that I know as much about it as most men. Well, if I was to be made Minister of Education my wife would have to be a lady who'd be accustomed to what the girl you've just mentioned is not accustomed to and couldn't be. I'm not saying a word against her, mind that. Only just that she wouldn't suit, and you know that yourself."

THE POLITICIAN

This shows that though Timothy is a great man now, there is a very good chance of his being a much greater one in a few years, and he intends to fill his new position in a way that will do us all credit.

CHAPTER SIX
THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

CHAPTER SIXTH
THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

THE MORE POPULAR A PROVERB IS, THE less likely it is to be true. When we get one which is repeated every day in newspaper articles and many times every day in conversation, we feel confident that it must be a lie. "History repeats itself" is such a saying. It is so popular that we feel it must be quite indispensable. Neither the leader-writer nor the prosy old gentleman who bores the members of his family at breakfast-time by commenting on the foreign intelligence could get on comfortably without saying that history repeats itself. As a matter of fact, the same thing never happens twice. But the proverb has this much justification: things are constantly happening which are a little like things which happened before, and the facile essayist of shallow mind and small real knowledge exaggerates the likeness and tries to gain a reputation as a philosophic historian by pretending to observe that human affairs run round and round in circles.

I am a facile essayist. I here point out that Ireland has seen the decay and failure of two aristocracies, and that the circumstances which attended the collapse were to some extent the same in both cases. We lost one aristocracy at the end of the seventeenth century, when Lying Dick Talbot died in Limerick, and Patrick Sarsfield, with the Wild Geese in his train, crossed the seas to France. That was a very nice, pictur-

esque aristocracy with a lot of fine qualities, especially good at fighting, which is indeed a characteristic of all aristocracies worthy of the name. Poets sang songs about it, most beautiful songs, and we have all sentimentalised about it ever since. The other aristocracy went under two hundred years later. We have not yet discovered that it was picturesque—our children will probably find that out—and nobody has as yet sung a single song about it; but it too was a fine fighting stock.

Now we come to the points of resemblance, the points in which the later muse of history plagiarised the work of her elder sister.

Both aristocracies were loyal in a stupid, unselfish way. Our seventeenth-century Jacobites were loyal to James II., who never cared anything about them, but used their loyalty as long as he thought it profitable to do so. Our nineteenth-century gentlemen were loyal to England, which was quite as stupid a thing to be, for Englishmen cared just as little for them as the Stewarts did for their predecessors. As long as they could be serviceable to England as a garrison to hold Ireland down, England used them. As soon as English statesmen discovered that they could govern Ireland more easily in other ways they surrendered their "faithful garrison," and the Irish aristocracy was forced to act the uncomfortable part of Jonah in the ship of State.

That is one point of resemblance; but it by no means exhausts the possibilities of the comparison. The seventeenth-century aristocracy was predominatingly Roman Catholic in religion, and their struggles partook of the nature of a religious war. Their nineteenth-century successors were quite as predominatingly Protestant, and they too succeeded in mixing their cause up with their religion. The Church of England appears to have succeeded in keeping James I. loyal to it by teaching him to say "No Bishop, no King"; and there was a good deal of truth in that, as Charles I. found when the Puritans triumphed at Naseby. The Irish gentry kept the Church of Ireland in order by saying "No landlord, no rector," and it may perhaps turn out that there was a small element of truth in that. At all events, the landlords did very sincerely believe that the faith of Protestantism throughout three-fourths of Ireland was bound up with that of their order. We cannot blame either aristocracy for acting as it did in this matter. Religion is always a respectable sanction for conduct, and there are many men who will not do their best for any cause without it.

But neither loyalty nor religion was the real reason for the fall of these two aristocracies. The Irish Jacobites might have gone on, as the Scottish Jacobites did, making themselves objectionable to the Government for a century or so, and nothing worse would have

happened than the cutting off of the heads of a few of them. The survivors might to-day be enrolling themselves in the Leagues of the White Rose, and nobody would mind. The nineteenth-century gentlemen might have fallen down and worshipped the English flag. The bulk of the Irish people would not have objected in the least, and the handful of genuine Nationalists would have raged against them in vain. The Irish Jacobites did not have to go away to France because they were Roman Catholics, any more than the gentry to-day are forced to desert their country because they are Protestants. We Irish are, after all, sane, and we do not object to any kind of religion so violently as to want to suppress it unless it has got itself mixed up with some other matter of a more practical kind. All religions teach that malefactors will suffer hereafter, and we are most of us content to wait till the proper time for the punishment of heretics. But there are some things which cannot very well be put off till after death, and one of them is the land question. If we do not settle here and now who is to own the land, there is no use settling it at all. Some people may conceivably want water in the next world. No creed suggests that anyone will want land.

And it is just over this land question that both our aristocracies have been broken. The seventeenth-century Jacobites look very fine and romantic in the pages of the poetry books, with their loyalty and their Ca-

tholicism, standing out against the common-sense compromise of Hanoverian kingship, and the Penal Laws looming on the horizon. But what these gentlemen wanted most was their estates and the upsetting of the Act of Settlement. The estates were theirs by all kinds of rights, but a new set of men had them and were disinclined to give them up. Irish history during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. is a welter of intrigues, law proceedings, petitions, fraud, bullying and fighting, all about land. English adventurers and Cromwellian soldiers had dispossessed the Irish proprietors. They held the reins of the Irish government. English public opinion was all on their side. Charles and James could do little in the way of restoring estates to their original owners. Dick Talbot was a good political advocate, for he had brains and few scruples, but he failed in his pleading. He failed again when he took to fighting, and the Irish gentry then became "Wild Geese," having been "worsted in the game."

The history of the fall of the nineteenth-century aristocracy is far less romantic. But the essential thing is the same. It was for their estates they struggled, not indeed against the original proprietors, for *they* had long ago become dukes in Spain, counts in Austria, generals in France, or else disappeared. The new claimants for the soil of Ireland were the tenants, men whose ancestors had laboured for the advantage of

both aristocracies, and never been treated with very much consideration by either. The story of this land war need not be retold. It is for the most part sordid and unpleasant. But it is interesting to speculate on the position and prospects of the now dispossessed gentlemen of Ireland.

They come of a fine stock, though they get little credit from anyone for the part they played in the past, and are even inclined, with a curious modesty, to ignore their own greatness. They, for instance, invented Irish Nationalism. Before their time there were Ulstermen, Munstermen, Geraldines, and Jacobites. But until the statesmen of Grattan's Parliament conceived it there was no idea of an Irish nation. They were good fighters, captains of men. A long list might be made of the great fighting men who sprang from this stock, with the name of Wellington at the head of it. I prefer to mention specially two men who seem typical, Beresford and Gough. Beresford raided Buenos Ayres with a handful of men, a buccaneering exploit which the Government had not the nerve to support. He organised the Portuguese army before Wellington took over the command. He blundered and won at Albuera. Gough fought the Sikhs, and few commanders have to their credit such a list of victories as his, won under the most amazing difficulties against overwhelming odds. These two men may stand as examples of the finest qualities of their race. Theirs was

THE LESSER OFFICIAL

a toughness of fibre, a supreme daring, and a joy in desperate adventure.

The older Irish aristocracy, the Jacobites whom the Cromwellians ousted, did not perish off the earth or sink into insignificance because they lost their estates. Their names go sounding through European history. It is not likely that the men of the other breed will vanish either. At present they are puzzled, inclined to bewilderment, a little sore. The changes of the last thirty years have come very quickly, very unexpectedly, and they have not yet adjusted themselves to their new circumstances. Parnell's brilliant plan of combining agrarian agitation with nationalism deprived the landlords of their political power. There are men still living who remember bonfires blazing in honour of the victory of a landlord at the polls, who have seen in Connacht the brothers or cousins of great lords drawn home from the hustings by crowds of cheering people. No such scenes are possible now. The people have chosen other representatives, and, if the old tales are true, display considerably less enthusiasm for them. Since Parnell's time the Irish landlords have ceased to count with the English party managers. They command no votes in elections and therefore cannot make themselves really unpleasant to any party. Their position is not unlike that of a small nation with no army in a congress of the representatives of the European Powers.

They are listened to politely and then ignored. They do not really matter, unless it suits someone, for strategic reasons, to pretend to exploit their grievances. It is not easy, it is certainly not pleasant, to recognise this kind of sudden impotence. It is perhaps impossible for men like the Irish gentry to realise all at once that in the whirling gamble of democratic politics things like friendship and loyalty are of no value or importance whatever. In time, no doubt, they will understand. In the meanwhile, with a pathetic faith in the existence of some kind of principle somewhere, they keep asking, "But what is to happen to our demesnes? How are we to live if you take our incomes from us?" Just as if anyone in the whole of England, Scotland, or Wales ever thinks about their demesnes or cares whether men with no voting power succeed in living or not!

For indeed their political power, their weight in the councils of State, is not the only thing the Irish gentry have lost. In what Michael Davitt called "The Fall of Feudalism" they have lost their land, and the revolution which changed the ownership of the soil of Ireland was brought about with great bitterness of spirit. It might indeed have been bloodier—many revolutions are. There never were any actual battles; but battles are not the worst things in the world. Assassinations and hangings—even when they go on for years—do not result in as much loss of life as a

couple of well-fought battles; but they leave much more ill-feeling behind. It is not easy for the men who lived through the "bad times" in Ireland to pass a damp sponge over the records of the past. The iron has entered into the soul of the men who took willing or unwilling part in our land war. And perhaps magnanimity is a harder virtue for the conquered than the conqueror to attain. The Irish gentry of the older generation still regard agrarian Nationalists as "blackguards." It is easy to blame them for a stubborn refusal to see any point of view but their own, but for men with their experience many excuses must be made. And, after all, the attitude of the older generation of Irish landlords towards Ireland is not nearly so astonishing a thing as their attitude towards England. That they should distrust their own fellow-countrymen is comprehensible. That they should go on trusting the English and continue loyal is amazing. For the English had quite as much to do with taking away their land from them as the Irish agitators. Act after Act was passed by Parliament, sometimes by one party, sometimes by the other, which diminished the power of landlords over what they regarded as their absolute property; until at last there was no way out of the hopeless tangle except the final abdication of sale.

Things might of course have been much worse. Many landlords have little to complain of in the price

they got for their estates, and even those who are most unfortunate in this respect are getting money, the most manageable of all forms of property, instead of land, which in Ireland, at all events, has of late years been an investment which no prudent capitalist would touch. The thought of an income, diminished but secure, accruing regularly through well-secured debentures, ought to, and no doubt does, take a good deal of the bitterness out of a sentimental grievance. But there remains a sadness. We picture an elderly gentleman viewing from the windows of his stately home the broad stretch of some pleasant countryside. "This," he reflects, "was mine once, was my father's before me and his father's before his day. The woods which cluster on the hills, the river with its pleasant fishing pools, the fields where oxen graze, the ploughed land and the bogs, were mine. The houses where the people live, even in a sense the people themselves, were mine. I rode among them a veritable lord, master of men and things with undisputed power. It is mine no more." He sees—and I cannot suppose the sight a pleasant one—the official surveyor making maps, the engineer following hard on his steps, cutting the old fields into strangely regular new shapes, making a chessboard of the countryside, erecting everywhere houses so ugly that the devil himself will not be able to devise uglier when he arranges accommodation in hell for impenitent artists.

Along with the loss of political power and the loss of landed property must be reckoned another loss still, and perhaps the most galling of the three. The Irish gentleman has lost his influence in local affairs. Once as a member of the Grand Jury he levied the local taxes, appointed the nephews of his old friends to collect them, and spent them when they were gathered in. He controlled the Boards of Guardians, appointed dispensary doctors, regulated the diet of paupers, inflicted fines and administered the law at Petty Sessions. Of all this power hardly a vestige now remains to him. Taxes are levied by County Councils, and he, somehow, is not a member of these bodies. The nephews of County Councillors, men strange to him, go round with demand notes and extract cash from the pockets of unwilling citizens. The roads are mended, and he reflects, not with entire satisfaction, that they are no worse than when he managed the mending of them. Even in the Petty Sessions Court he no longer holds his old pride of place. Magistrates—*ex officio* magistrates, who are only magistrates because people elected them to be something else—sit side by side with him, and the law, though slightly altered in its tendencies, is quite as erratic a thing in these new hands as it was when he had it entirely in his.

The Irish gentleman, bereft of his chance of going to Parliament, cut off from the interest of managing

an estate, denied the control of local affairs, considerably poorer than he used to be, is apparently condemned to a life of idleness. Men of an outworn stock might be content to fold their hands and rail at destiny. But the Irish gentleman, for all he has been through, has blood in his veins yet. He feels that he has it in him to play some part in life, and is dimly aware that the old tradition of his order, the *noblesse oblige* which moves all true aristocracies, is of value even in the modern democratic state. The days of fighting on Landlord Defence Committees are nearly over, for year by year there are fewer landlords to defend. The solace of bold speaking in the House of Lords, his by virtue of election by his peers or the possession of some forgotten English title, ceases to be comforting, since it is obviously of no great moment what the House of Lords says or does. The maintenance of the Union still has a certain attraction as a field for activity; but it is not to be supposed that a man can occupy his whole time and energy in writing cheques for a party organisation, and it is only occasionally that the General Synod of the Church of Ireland gives the Irish landlords an opportunity for declaring that they are Unionists for the good of their country. What remains for him? Along what lines is he to work? What chance has he, a man of energy and a certain knowledge of the world, with a high tradition behind him and a good heart in him—

what chance has he of doing something?

Things are certainly confusing, and our Irish gentleman is not the most clear-sighted of men. He belongs to a class which, taken as a whole, has better hearts and principles than brains. There are in Ireland to-day a dozen or so minor forms of social service, lace-making industries for peasant girls, knitting industries, the embroidery of the corners of pocket-handkerchiefs, and so forth. But a grown man can hardly find his life's work in the promotion of lace-making, or direct his whole energies to selling tweeds. These are more properly work for his wife, and she, in the intervals of other duties, does them admirably. There are crusades against consumption, desperate struggles to get windows open, and the foundation of sanatoria. But—it is singularly unfortunate—the tone of the philanthropists who go forth with banners against the Great White Plague is unattractive to the Irish gentleman. He has, in spite of his misfortunes, a sense of humour. It is almost the only one of his old possessions which has survived the *débâcle*, and no man with a sense of humour can be the apostle of a cause exploited as this one is. He always fails at critical moments to take himself quite seriously.

There is the economic gospel of Sir Horace Plunkett, and this, at first sight, has much to commend it. The official Nationalists, the men of a pledge-bound Parliamentary party, hate it heartily. The Irish gen-

tleman hates them, and is therefore predisposed to find some good in anything which they detest. It is also, like most economic movements, an affair of common sense. In a country where every sane man is sick to death of flights of oratory and great sentiments of every kind the cold water of common sense is a singularly attractive thing. Yet the Irish gentry, as a class, have hitherto held aloof from the co-operative movement. There is a remnant of old prejudice to be got rid of; for it is not many years since the founder of the movement was suspected of sympathy with Land Leaguers. There is a deep-rooted distrust of all new things, partly instinctive, partly the consequence of having seen a number of new things all of which turned out in the end to be either futile or objectionable. There is a certain fastidious timidity, a dislike of going down into the dusty highways where the pedestrians are, a doubt about the welcome which awaits men of another class. Yet it seems that our disinherited class of country gentlemen are getting over their difficulties. One and another and another have grasped at the opportunity for useful service which the co-operative movement offers them.

It is perhaps not altogether vain to look forward to a time when Irish farmers, tired of the cant of political publicans will seek for disinterested leaders from a class which they have no longer any reason to distrust; when the Irish gentleman, tired of sulking in

his tent, realising again his capacity for public work,
will accept the new conditions and be ready to be
greatest among us because he is one that
serveth, not his own interests only,
but those of others.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE FARMER

CHAPTER SEVEN THE FARMER

JAMES BLAKE LAY DYING. HE LAY IN the little room off the kitchen, in one of those beds which are to be found in all old-fashioned Irish cottages, built into the wall. Seen from outside, the roofs of these beds look like queer, meaningless little penthouses. They slope down, from the whitewashed walls of the cottage itself, to their own whitewashed walls, which rise some four feet from the ground, the highest point of the little roof being perhaps five feet high, where it joins the wall of the cottage. Inside the house the bed appears as a dark mysterious cave, packed confusedly with blankets and quilts, among which the sleepers nestle and find warmth. There are doors, like the doors of cupboards, by which the bed can be cut off from the room, and these are often closed when there is someone in the bed.

Nothing could be more abhorrent to modern ideas of sanitary sleeping-places than these beds. Fresh air is an impossibility. Even if there were fresh air in the room it could not get into the bed, and there is no fresh air in the room, except such as may come in from the kitchen through the door of communication. For the window of the room is very small, about a foot square, and it cannot be opened. James Blake had slept in that bed for forty years, and all that time his wife had slept with him. For twenty out of the forty years there was generally a baby or a young child beside the mother; always two living

beings, very often three, in the bed. Yet James Blake lived to be seventy-five years of age and was a hale man all his life. His wife was only five years younger than he. She had borne fourteen children, and was a strong woman still.

She sat beside him, with her hands folded in her lap, watching him silently, glancing from time to time at the patch of sunlight which streamed in through the little window. Her sons, the "boys" to her still, though John the eldest was thirty-eight, had gone out to work after dinner. Since then the patch of sunlight had passed slowly across the floor, from a place near the middle of the room to the head of the bed where her husband lay. When it reached the foot of the bed it would be time for Mrs Blake to go into the kitchen, mend the fire, and hang the kettle on the hook. The "boys" would be coming in then for their tea. They were cutting the meadow, and would be both hungry and thirsty. In the meanwhile she sat silent, and the dying man lay silent in the bed.

James Blake had never suffered from any illness, nor needed the care of a doctor. It was by an accident that he found his death in the end. A young mare stumbled and threw him on the highroad, a little way from his house. The neighbours carried him home and murmured to each other that a man of his years ought not to have gone riding on a young mare. But this was not James's own opinion. He had

ridden many young mares, and saw no reason for being afraid of this one. Nor did Mrs Blake pay any heed to what the neighbours said. She spoke no words of rebellious grief, and expressed no vain regret, when the doctor told her that her husband had received internal injuries and could not live.

"It is the will of God," she said, "and what is to be must be, surely."

After that she spoke no more on the subject. She sat and watched him, with no expression on her face except the usual one of wise, motherly calm. There is no wisdom to be got from books, nor even from a man's wide experience of life, equal to that of a woman who has borne many children and reared them, who has for years which she has long ceased to reckon, been the partner of one man's successes and failures, sharer in many hopes and fears. To her, far more than the Madonna-faced girl with her first baby at her breast, belongs the perfection of womanhood. Mrs Blake had been through years when the babies came to her so quickly that the cradle at the fireside was never empty, when the suckling of one overtook the teething of another, when she kneaded dough with a child asleep beside her, plunged her arms into the washtub while she rocked the cradle with her foot. She has scrubbed the faces of rebellious boys, and mended sudden tears in the frocks of whimpering girls, in desperate haste to get them away to school and off

her hands for half the day. She has spent long years learning the trade of motherhood, and all the time life has been continually springing into being around her as well as within her and struggling to adolescence. She has been Providence to broody hens, instinctively yearning for the consummation of their motherhood, has set them on nests to hatch, and afterwards scattered meal for their fluffy chicks. She has watched over the labour pains of cows, and taught their calves to suck with her own finger dipped in milk. She has fed orphan lambs, and tended litters of young pigs. It is small wonder now that she is motherly as Nature herself. As Nature in spring-time, so she in the late autumn of her life.

Small wonder also that she is calm, that no joy has any power to stir her now, nor any sorrow is fierce enough to break her heart. She has seen children die, three of them; she has seen others, six sons of hers, depart to other lands and known that they would return no more. She has sent three daughters to the houses of husbands and nursed their babies in her arms. There were nights when she sat anxious in the kitchen, waiting for her husband to return from the fair, knowing that when he did come he would be thick of speech, blear-eyed, staggering in his gait: yet never so drunk but that he had his money safe, the price of the beasts he had sold; never so incapable but that he had sense enough to hand the greasy

THE FARMER

notes to her. And from that on they were hers; she kept them, spent them, saved them for the rent, or hoarded them for a daughter's portion. James spent what custom ordained that he should spend at the fair, drank luck to a buyer, stood treat to a friend. Afterwards he asked no money of her. She clothed him, fed him: when the time came had the money by her for the rent and to meet the calls of tax-gatherers. He never doubted that she was the best manager of the money he earned. She never scolded him nor whined. It was once in three months, perhaps, that he drank. The next day he went to his work, ploughed, reaped, dug, laboured, going in and out to her, finding her always ready for him, always with the same wise, tolerant smile. To her the man's occasional drinking was one of the inevitable troubles of married life. She rebelled against it no more than she did against the pains of child-bearing. In the end a calm was hers like the calm of God Himself.

Her children are not vocal. They cannot "rise up and call her blessed," but surely "the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." We may "give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gate."

James Blake stirred uneasily in the bed. His eyes wandered hither and thither until they met hers. For a long time he gazed at her, and a look of peace came over his face.

"Do you mind the first of that stock we had?" he said. "I bought her a long-tailed filly, from Johnny Casey, and I broke her to the plough myself."

His mind is not on the young mare standing in the stable with broken knees, but has gone back many, many years, to the great-great-grandmother of the one who threw him. Mrs Blake nodded. She has not forgotten that mare. She stood, a comely young woman then, with the first of her babies in her arms, while her husband led the filly past her, ran with the halter in his hand across the field and back again, and stood beside her with the sweat shining on his face. It had been a great day. With pride she had fetched from the hiding-place eleven pounds, and Johnny Casey had given back five shillings for a lucky penny. Johnny Casey was dead, long, long ago. The mare was dead, and her descendant had thrown James Blake.

Mrs Blake rose, and crossed the room slowly to the table under the window. She took a cup of milk and put it to her husband's lips. He tasted it and then lay back again. His eyes closed. For half an hour more there was silence in the room. Mrs Blake sat in her old patient attitude, waiting. The patch of sunlight crept a little way across the floor. James Blake dozed, breathing heavily.

After a while his eyes opened again. They fixed themselves this time, not on his wife's face, but on

the little window. It was not possible to see anything out of the window. It was small, high in the wall, and divided into four tiny squares filled with thick, greenish glass. But James had no need of the vision of his eyes. The scene outside was vivid in his memory. There was the yard, paved with cobble stones. Hens and ducks strayed about it. Beyond was the garden with the young apple trees in it, planted three years ago, the cabbages growing between them and the patch of yellow marigolds sown to please his wife. At the bottom of the garden was the stream, with a rough-hewn log reaching from bank to bank, a perilous bridge. Beyond that again the ground rose sharply, and a steep hill faced the house. It was of it that James Blake was thinking.

"The boys will be in the hill field," he said.

"They're cutting the hay," said Mrs Blake; "and it's a grand crop, thanks be to God."

The minds of husband and wife, working together in a curiously perfect sympathy, went back to the time when the hill was waste land, strewn thickly with great grey stones, among which the whins grew. In summer, in those old days, the hill was a blaze of golden blossom. In the autumn James burnt the whins. The sound of the twigs crackling in the flames reached Mrs Blake while she worked. Heavy clouds of acrid smoke floated across the ground and were blown into the house. All through the winter the charred

roots and unconsumed thick branches of the whins lay black upon the hill. In early spring the sheep and lambs picked tender grass among the stones. Then the whins reasserted themselves and the place was gold again. It was six years after his marriage that the great thought of clearing the land came to James. He set at his task alone, for none of the boys was big enough then to help him. It took him seven years to do the work, and before he finished the eldest boy was carrying light burdens for him. In summer he could do nothing on the hill. The long days were filled and over-filled with other tasks. But in the winter James went forth day after day with pick-axe, crowbar, and spade. He toiled through rain and storm. When the drifting mists hid even the near cottage from him, he toiled on, then absolutely alone with the grey stones and the obstinate roots of the whins. Often a whole day's work gained no more than a single yard of the hillside. But the yard was won absolutely. It was his. James was a strong man in those days, but he came back to his wife in the evenings utterly tired. It took him seven years to clear that hill. Now the boys were mowing a crop of hay on it.

One incident after another of that epic of toil came back to him as he lay on his bed. There was a day when he came upon a large stone deeply buried. He dug round it, hacked at the whin roots which clung to it, prized at it with a crowbar, and found that, strain

as he might, he could not move it. He borrowed a sledge-hammer from a neighbour, and little by little, hammering at projecting corners, smashed the rock to pieces. He spent a whole week at that rock. There was a day when, having dug deeply for whin roots, he came upon a spring. The water oozed up and he worked ankle-deep in thick mud. In the end he dug a channel for the stream he had made, and set it running down the hillside into the river at the bottom, as it runs to-day. Of such things he never spoke. Even to his wife he had nothing to tell of triumph or disaster. Her memory dwelt, not on incidents, but on the long monotony of the winter evenings, when James sat nodding heavy-eyed in the chimney corner, and his clothes steamed in the heat of the fire; when she had to rouse him as soon as the kettle boiled and the home-baked loaf was on the table, when he staggered into bed, stupefied with weariness, an hour or more before she had finally quieted the babies, laid aside her iron, banked the fire and quenched the lamp.

"John will have the place," said James Blake.

His wife nodded. John would behave as his father had. He would plough, reap, sell and bring the money home for her to spend and to keep. She would have one man less to "do for," one shirt less to wash, one coat less to patch, when James was gone. She would still be the unquestioned mistress of the house till the day when she felt her strength failing her at last. Then

she would make a match for John and some girl would come into the house to take her place, bear babies, feed cows and pigs, wash, sew, bake, rule, and endure. But while her own strength lasted she was fully determined that no strange girl should be brought into the house "on top of her."

An hour passed and James Blake spoke no more. The patch of sunlight reached the foot of the bed. Mrs Blake rose and went into the kitchen. She raked the red ashes of the fire together and piled fresh sods of turf over them. She drew out the long bar which swung, soot-grimed, from the chimney-side, adjusted the chain on it, and hung the kettle from the hook. She took the coarse cups and saucers from the dresser and put them on the table. She laid a brown flat loaf and a saucer of butter beside them. She set the tea-pot down on the hearth to warm. The familiar sound of her movements through the kitchen roused James from his torpor. He looked for her, and, not finding her beside him, half turned himself in the bed. He uttered no groan, made no noise, but she knew that he was awake and had stirred. In an instant she was beside him, bending over him.

"Is there anything you're wanting?" she said.

For a minute he lay looking at her without answering.

"It could be," he said then, "that Julia Mary might look in on us one of these days."

"Julia Mary's coming," said his wife, "and so is the other girls, though it's hardly ever Susan'll be able to get this length and her baby only a week old."

It was Julia Mary he wanted to see. She was the youngest of the family, three years younger than her next sister, eight years younger than Susan. She had been more trouble to him than either of her sisters. She went to school willingly and was a good scholar; but there were other things which she would not learn. In the evenings when the work of the house was done Mrs Blake used to get out a large wheel and spin great balls of grey wool. The two elder girls learned the art willingly and were as deft as their mother. They set the great wheel spinning just as she did with a swift motion of one hand, and stepped backwards across the floor drawing the long thread after them. Julia Mary preferred to sit in the chimney corner, close under the smoky lamp, with a book in her hands. When her mother scolded her, James took her part, and she never learned to spin. The two elder sisters had homely faces and coarse figures. Julia Mary grew into a strangely pretty girl. She found a lover. A young farmer, a neighbour, came to James and asked for her, after the sober patriarchal fashion of the country. But James, though he loved his youngest daughter best, was a just man. He would not put a slight upon her elder sisters by allowing the youngest to marry before they were settled. Julia Mary's suitor was told

that he might have Susan if he liked and £50 along with her. He went away and waited. In due time a match was made for Susan and she went to the house of her husband, taking £25 along with her from Mrs Blake's savings in the Post Office, and the promise of £25 more when her first child was born. Julia Mary's suitor came back again and again was sent away. There was still one sister between Julia Mary and marriage. James moved slowly in the business of finding husbands for his daughters. A man needs to be cautious in such matters. He did not grudge the girl her dowry, but £50 is hard to come by and must not lightly be given into uncertain hands. It was three years before Julia Mary's lover could return again. Then he got her. In the meanwhile Julia Mary had not walked the simple trodden path. The girl had fancies for this and that. It was hard to know what she would do and would not do. Her mother watched her with anxious eyes. Her father was often troubled about her. But it was she that he wanted to see in the end.

"The boys" returned from the hill field, and John, stepping softly, came into the room where his father lay.

"How's the work?" said James.

"There's upwards of three ton in it," said John, "and we'll get it saved dry if the weather holds, and that's what it's likely to do, for there's a heavy dew out

and the wind was going round after the sun all day. You'll be pleased, so you will, when you see it."

"I'll not see it," said James.

'Don't be talking that way," said John. "Sure you'll be out looking at us by the time we have it in the tramp-cocks. What's to hinder you?"

"I'll not see it," said James; "but what does it matter if I don't, so long as it's a good crop and well saved?"

"Go on now to your tea, John," said Mrs Blake, "and don't be bothering your father. If it's the will of God for him to see the hay he'll see it."

But James Blake was right. He saw little more on earth. For a while after John left he lay looking at his wife. Gradually the expression passed out of his eyes, and though they were still fixed on her she could not tell whether they saw her or not. At eight o'clock that evening Julia Mary stood beside him, and there was a momentary gleam of conscious recognition on his face. That passed too. Mrs Blake put her children out of the room and sat with him alone through the dim twilight of the summer night.

Once more and only once he spoke to her. It was at early dawn. A bird broke into sudden shrill song in the bushes behind the house. A cock crowed gallantly. There came a thrill of reawakening life among the birds and beasts. James opened his eyes, and fixed them for the last time upon his wife's face.

"Let not John," he said, "be meddling with any of their League work, either good or bad."

This had been his own rule through life. Good as well as bad came out of "League work." He knew that, but it was always for him "their League work." He stood detached.

There had been times, James remembered them, when the reward of all his toil in the reclaiming of the furzy hill would have been an increase in his rent, when the labour would have been his, the fruit of it another's. Once—and the memory of this remained with curiously little bitterness—he and three neighbours had asked their landlord to make a lane from the highroad to their land. They wanted to be able to use carts to carry their hay to market. The landlord gave them ten pounds and they made the lane, paving it roughly with broken stones, fencing it from the fields with loose stone walls on either side. Afterwards ten pounds a year was added to the rent that they paid. Their land was worth so much more because of the existence of the lane. It was League work which made such things impossible, and James knew it. Nevertheless, he had not meddled with League work, and it was his wish that John should not meddle with it either. Good had come of League work, but the thing itself was bad. His wife was of his mind in the matter.

There was a night, a still frosty night, near about

Christmas-time, which Mrs Blake remembered very well. She thought of it when her husband spoke of League work, and no doubt some dim memory of it was in his mind too. It was while James was working on the hill. He sat, as usual, nodding sleepily by the fire. A child fretful with teething was in her arms. For all her rocking and low crooning songs she could not still it in sleep. Suddenly, startlingly clear through the quiet air, came the sound of a shot, and immediately afterwards a loud cry of agony. She shook James into consciousness, and together they heard a second shot. No cry followed it. She hugged the baby tightly to her breast while she and her husband stared at each other with horror in their eyes.

"Some of their League work," he whispered.

She laid the baby in the cradle and took James by the hand. She said no word to him nor he to her, but the same desperate terror was in both their hearts. In those days it was not well to interfere with the revenge, the wild justice or mad hate, of the fierce men who held the countryside in awe. There were stories afloat of visits made to lonely cottages at night, of men, and women too, dragged from their beds and made to pay a fearful price for help given to the League's enemies. James Blake hung back though he knew that a man lay near his door, perhaps wounded and in sore need of help. His wife trembled more than he did, but it was she who drew the bolt of the

door and went out first. James followed her. Together they stumbled across the yard and along the dark lane. New-formed ice in the cart-ruts crackled under their feet as they walked, and at every sound they started and paused, panting. There was little light from the stars and no moon had risen. They groped their way to the highroad and crept fearfully along it, and in the end found the thing they sought. The man was dead. Of that there was no question, for one side of his head was blown away with a charge of shot fired at very close quarters. Nothing could be done for him. Hand in hand James Blake and his wife fled back to their house, stumbling, tripping, falling twice, but driven swiftly by blind terror.

Next day James went back to his work on the hill. A dull awe rested over the neighbourhood. The police came and kept futile guard over the spot where the man had died. Keen-faced, stern men went to and fro among the people asking questions. James spoke no word of what he and his wife had seen. To this day even his sons have never heard the story. But the night remained an ineffaceable memory. It was better for John in the time to come not to "meddle with their League work, either good or bad."

Yet, except that one word of warning about his son, James Blake made no sign of thinking at all about the revolution which had taken place in his lifetime. An old strong feudalism had been broken.

Power had been wrenched from hands which held it with a firm grip. The doctrine of the rights of property, deemed the unassailable foundation of civilised society, had been proved a foolish imagination. Men, on one side and the other, had died in scores, on the roadside by lawless force, on the scaffold with the sanction of the law. Economists and historians hereafter will mark those turbulent years as a great turning-point in Irish history. James Blake lived through them, and his experience left on him no more than a dubious distrust of the wisdom of "League work." For him there had always been something more important than the speeches of the orators or the oaths of conspirators or the stern strength of men who stood for law. The coming of the spring-time with its promise of new life, the exuberant fertility of grass and corn, of sheep and oxen, were of more moment to him than the blazing of passion's oriflammes or the wild strikings of desperate men against their wrongs. There is a passage in Zola's *Débâcle* which tells how a ploughman drove his white horse across and across a hillside near Sedan while the French guns thundered against the quickly closing circle of German steel. He ploughed, and those who survived the charging and the cannonade had afterwards bread to eat. The glory and the shame both passed. The crops on the broken land ripened. James Blake, hacking whin roots on his hill, was like that

ploughman. Men, in those days of revolution, struggled as desperately in Ireland as on any battle-field. Good and evil have followed, mingled inextricably, but James Blake's boys are reaping a heavy crop on the hill field. That at least is good.

For all kinds of work, even "League work," God in the end pays the wages that are due, gives His reward of sweet or bitter things; but it seems as if He paid more wages and better for the work which James Blake did than for any other. Men who do other kinds of work have high praises given to their memories. James Blake had none. Yet no man has a more enduring monument than his. The rich man's tablet of brass, even the poet's verse, of which he boasts, are numbered in the end among forgotten things; but the hill field will bear its crops year after year. In the new world or at home are strong men, labouring on the land or sweating beside steel furnaces, men whom

James Blake begot, whom his wife
bore and reared.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE PUBLICAN

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IT IS SOMETIMES SAID (BY IGNORANT and prejudiced people) that we Irish are too fond of politics to be good business men. The statement is a gross slander. Belfast is a city as much given over to politics as Athens in New Testament times was to the pursuit of novelty; but no man ever heard of the most convinced Unionist refusing to make a profit by selling his goods, merely because the purchaser is a Nationalist. The Orangeman will—so we are assured—practise rifle-shooting so as to be able to pick off with accuracy the members of a Home Rule Parliament when it comes into being; but in the meanwhile he will sell them what double damask they may want at present for tablecloths when they are giving banquets to the Chief Secretary; and afterwards, when the shooting begins, he will sell them all the linen they require for their shrouds. It is very unjust to say of such men that they allow their politics to interfere with their business. And Belfast is not the only place in Ireland where traders are unprejudiced. My friend Peter Fogarty is just as good a business man in his way as anyone in Belfast. Indeed, I am inclined to think he is superior in real acuteness. The Belfast man keeps his politics distinct from his business. Peter Fogarty mixes the two, to the great advantage of his business.

Peter is a publican. There are supposed to be too many publicans in the small towns of the South and

West. Some years ago an energetic reformer started a crusade for diminishing the number of publicans, and appealed to the magistrates all over the country to refuse to issue licences. Peter Fogarty expressed the strongest approval of the plan, and promised to do his best in his own locality. Temperance is not, in Ireland, strictly speaking, a matter of politics; but Peter's attitude illustrates the way in which he regards all public questions. Many publicans regarded the new plan as an attack on their interests. Peter maintained that there really are far too many public-houses in his town, and that half of them ought to be closed. If they were he could do a far larger business than he does at present. That is a perfectly sane way of looking at the question, and it cannot be said of the man who adopts it that he allows principles—other people's principles—to injure his business.

Peter is also a leading member of the Urban District Council, and as such he frequently denounces emigration as the curse of Ireland, speaking eloquently and with tears about the departure from our shores of hundreds of young men and women. If he were the kind of man who allowed his opinions to interfere with his business, he would cease to act as an emigration agent, and would refuse to make a profit off the sale of tickets to America. This is the kind of stupid and unbusinesslike thing we Irish are supposed to do; and the English, who pride themselves up-

on having a good commercial instinct, despise us accordingly. But Peter Fogarty deserves no such reproach. His hatred of emigration is as strong as any man's could be. I am sure of this, because he has often told me so. But he goes on making a profit out of the sale of tickets to America. That is business. Moreover, we all, except a few cranks, thoroughly understand and approve of Peter's action. We cheer his speeches because we too are convinced that emigration is a curse. We buy our tickets from him when we want to go. This shows that we appreciate good business methods and are not at all such fools as people make us out.

It was two years ago that Peter triumphantly demonstrated that politics not only ought not to interfere with business, but might actually be used to improve it. His business wanted improving at the time. There had been a temperance meeting in the town, an unusually successful one, for nearly everyone in the place signed a pledge. It began with the children, but nobody minded that. In fact, we all encouraged the children to sign pledges. We thought, quite naturally, that the missioners would be quite satisfied if they got the children. Most missioners are, and these ones should have been. After all, if you get the children you get the next generation, and that ought to be enough. But these missioners were not satisfied. They went on to the women. Peter Fogarty and many

others began to feel uneasy. They had offered up their children as sacrifices to a good cause. It seemed a little hard that they should offer their wives too. However, they did it. Women, as everybody knows, are better without drink, and the loss of their custom did not make much difference to the publicans, because it is only one here and there who drinks anything worth considering. But the missioners were not satisfied even then. They began to enrol the men. Peter had a long talk on the subject with the local clergy. He pointed out that if the men signed the pledge, and then gave up drinking, the publicans would stop making money. If the publicans stopped making money, they would not be able to pay their dues and support the clergy. The local clergy saw the force of that argument, but the missioners did not. They belonged to an order up in Dublin, and it did not matter to them whether Peter Fogarty paid his dues or not. They went on enrolling men as pledged teetotallers, and Peter's customers deserted him one by one. At last things reached such a point that Peter's shop was practically empty.

This was a very serious matter. Peter knew, of course, that the condition of total abstinence to which the town was reduced would not last. The newspapers spoke of a wave of temperance having swept over the country, and it is the nature of all waves to recede after a time. But even a temporary loss is exceeding-

ly unpleasant, and Peter looked round him for some way of restoring his business to its usual condition of prosperity. He did not take counsel with any of his fellow-publicans, or attempt anything so foolish as a united effort. In the first place, a united effort of any kind requires a public meeting, and it is not decent to hold public meetings for the suppression of temperance movements. No priest could be got to take the chair at such a meeting, and Peter Fogarty is the last man in Ireland to act against the clergy. In the next place, Peter did not want to improve the position of the other publicans. He wanted to improve his own; so it was no use asking the other publicans to co-operate with him. They would not have done it. The only person he consulted was his wife. She had been one of the first people to sign the pledge, and was really interested in the temperance movement, but she did not want to see her husband losing money. She has often said to me that the best friends of temperance in Ireland are the publicans. This shows that Mrs Fogarty was a clever woman. No one of merely ordinary intelligence would say a thing like that. Fogarty was quite right to consult her.

At the next meeting of the Urban District Council Fogarty made a long speech about the land for the people. This is always a popular subject, because everyone thinks he is a person and almost everyone wants land. If the land is really divided among the

people, as most of us think it ought to be, we should all get an acre or two, and that would be so much hard cash into our pockets. Fogarty said, I remember, that although temperance was an excellent thing, one of the best things in the world, it was not much use without land. Everybody agreed with him in that. He also said that if the people would stand shoulder to shoulder they would get the land. He referred to the struggles for freedom made by the Irish people in the old days, and quoted four lines of poetry which I have forgotten. It must have been Mrs Fogarty who taught him the poetry, for she was educated at a good convent and knows a lot. Peter himself has not time to read poetry.

The people took Fogarty's advice and began to stand shoulder to shoulder, in his shop. At first they did not drink anything except mineral waters on account of their pledges. But even that was better than nothing. There is a good deal of profit to be made out of mineral waters if people drink enough of them. The trouble is that hardly anyone cares for more than one bottle in the course of the evening. Peter had a new kind of mineral water which was dark brown and looked like porter in the tumbler. He used to press it on the men who came to talk about getting the land; but they would not take much of it. They complained that it did not suit their stomachs. In the end that brown mineral water turned out to be

quite useful to Peter, although the people did not take much of it. It looked so like porter that porter looked very like it, and it was hard to tell by looking at the tumbler which of the two a man was drinking.

It was not quite clear at first what the men who gathered in Peter's shop were to do besides drinking mineral waters.

In the old days an agitation in favour of the land for the people meant saying nasty things about landlords. But both the landlords in our neighbourhood had agreed to sell their estates, so there was nothing to be gained by denouncing them. Peter saw that, and it was he who suggested that the reason why so many people had no land was that the few people had too much. What he said was this:

"There's the land," pointing out of the window, "and there are the people," looking at the fellows who were pretending they liked lemonade. "Put the people on the land and the thing's settled."

Nothing could be plainer than that, and several men, in the excitement of seeing the point, drank off the porter which had been given them by mistake instead of the brown temperance drink, and did not notice the difference in taste. They all asked for more of the same. The next night there was a great call for this drink, and more than one remarked that it was nearly as good as porter and agreed with them better than they thought. The idea of getting the land was

taking hold of them, and they were not so particular as they were before what they drank. Peter said that there were several men in the locality who held large ranches of land and ought to be made to give them up. He mentioned Daniel O'Sullivan for one. Now Daniel O'Sullivan is not popular in the parish. He has a nasty, sneering way of talking about members of Parliament, and the other tried and trusted leaders of the people, which we do not like. He is an old man now, but when he was young he was a Fenian. Nobody would blame him for that. What we are not inclined to put up with is the way he looks at the rest of us as if we were not as good Nationalists as any Fenian. And Daniel O'Sullivan has over a hundred acres of land. He and his three sons work on it. They make far more out of it than anyone has a right to make, and it is well known that they have a lot put by in the bank. It was decided at once that a boycott should be put on Daniel O'Sullivan and his family. Peter suggested that all the cattle on O'Sullivan's farm should be driven off and scattered about the country. There was a great deal of talk about that, and some men took a drop of whisky to clear their brains. In the end it was decided not to drive O'Sullivan's cattle for a few days till it was seen how he would behave himself. It it pretty well known that O'Sullivan keeps two guns in the house, and you never can be sure what a man like that—a sworn Fenian—might do if he was an-

noyed. Besides, it is only fair to give a man a chance of submitting decently to the will of the people before taking strong measures against him. A letter was written to O'Sullivan in the name of the League telling him that we all expected him to give up his land to those who wanted it more than he did.

The next night and the night after that the names of other men were mentioned—men that had more land than they had any right to, who ought to be made to give up some of it. Peter made a list of the names, and the list kept getting longer and longer. At the end of the week there were pretty nearly thirty names on it, and three of Peter's customers were arrested for being drunk in the streets. It would not be right to say that Peter was pleased with them for getting drunk, but he was not very angry with them. He was the only magistrate on the Bench when they were brought up, and he fined them sixpence each, which showed that he did not think they had done anything very bad. The week after that another twenty names were added to the list, and it began to be rather hard to carry out the boycotting properly. Nobody could remember for certain whose name was on the list and whose was not, and some trouble arose through mistakes being made. One night a lot of cattle were driven off the farm of a man called Hanrahan who was not supposed to be boycotted at all, and happened, besides, to be a very good customer of Peter's. He came

in next morning and complained to Peter, who was very angry about it, and told the men who were in his shop that night that it would not do to be making mistakes of the kind, and that unless they were quite sure what they were doing they were not to drive anybody's cattle. The men said they were sorry about what had happened and they would be more careful in future; but they put Hanrahan's name on the list, along with two or three more, because they said that the authority of the League would suffer in the neighbourhood if it got to be known that they had driven the cattle of a man they had no spite against. Peter saw the point of their argument, but was not very well pleased.

It was at that time that Peter Fogarty's son sent an account of the lawless condition of the district up to *The Irish Times* and the other gutter papers of the Unionist party which take a delight in vilifying the good name of the people of Ireland. Nobody could blame young Fogarty for doing that. He earns a trifle by sending news up to the Dublin papers, and of course he has as good a right as anyone else to make money if he can. There was a good deal of attention given to the matter in the press, and some fellow, an Orangeman from Belfast, asked a question about us in Parliament. He wanted to know whether the law-abiding inhabitants of the district were living under a reign of terror or not, and what the Govern-

ment was going to do about it. There was only one thing the Government could do. It sent down a lot of extra police into the town. We did not mind that in the least, because we did not know that we should have to pay for them, and at first they were an advantage to the town. They paid for what they ate, and the barrack was too small to hold them, so Peter Fogarty let the Government have the use of an old store for the police to sleep in. He got ten pounds rent for it, which was moderate considering that it was the only place in the town where the police could sleep, and so Peter could have charged anything he liked for it.

From that on, the League was very careful for a long time; not that the boys were afraid of the police, for they were not, but on account of what Peter had said to them about making mistakes.

They kept on adding names to their list and making speeches, but the boycotting did not amount to very much. In fact, except the name of the thing, none of the victims minded it at all; and one or two who lived some way from the town, and did not come in except on fair days, never found out that they were boycotted till long after it was all over. But there were others who felt hurt about it. They admitted that they were not put to any inconvenience, but they said that their reputations suffered, and that it was not a nice thing to have it cast up in the teeth

of their children that their parents had been setting themselves against the will of the people. They used to complain to Peter, and some of them went so far as to withdraw their custom from his shop and deal elsewhere. This, naturally, did not suit Peter. The temperance mission was bad enough, but that only meant a temporary loss of money. When his regular customers began to give their orders to other shops, it was a much more serious affair; for it is very hard to get a customer back once he begins to owe money to somebody else. Peter told the League that he thought the agitation had gone far enough and that it had better stop. He said that he was sure that the Government must be pretty well convinced by that time that the people wanted the land and meant to have it.

I'm inclined to think that the League would have been glad enough to take Peter's advice, only for the attitude of Daniel O'Sullivan and his three sons. That old reprobate used to come into the town every evening and walk about the streets asking everybody he met when the boycotting was going to begin. He meant that for insolence, for he knew perfectly well that he had been boycotted for over a month, and that there had been questions asked in Parliament about it, and that there were forty extra police in the town doing nothing except protecting him. His sons were as bad as he was. They used to talk to the

members of the League in a way that was meant for derision. They said they were tired sitting up at night with guns watching for the cattle-drivers to come, and that if something was not done soon they would not wait but would just shoot a League boy or two to keep the neighbourhood from getting dull.

No man of spirit would stand being talked to in that way. The cause of the people is a sacred thing, and making a mock of it is much the same as scoffing at religion, which is what O'Sullivan's sons were inclined to do, for they were often disrespectful to the clergy. The League boys made up their minds to have one good demonstration before they took Peter's advice and let the agitation stop. They were determined to show that they were in earnest, and that anybody who went against them would suffer for it. They did not say a word to Peter about what they meant to do, for fear he might advise them to keep quiet. They arranged among themselves to add another name to the list of boycotted people, and they chose out a widow woman who had a twenty-acre farm, about three miles out of the town, in a place which the police never went near. It was well known that she had the land stocked with uncommonly fine beasts, and her eldest child was no more than a girl of fourteen, so there did not seem to be any particular risk in driving her cattle.

Well, those cattle were driven one night. Some of

them were not found for two days afterwards, and all of them in different parts of the country. The League boys were tremendously pleased with themselves for a while; but afterwards they were not pleased at all. It turned out that the cattle did not belong to the widow, but to Peter Fogarty. He had lent the widow money, and when she could not pay either the principal or the interest he took over her farm and put his own stock on it. Nobody knew this except Peter himself and the widow; for Peter is not the sort of man who boasts about the money he lends, or the interest he gets for it.

There was a terrible row in the town, and Peter gave the League boys a talking-to that they are not likely to forget as long as they live. But he did not content himself with talking. He had the list of the boycotted men locked up in the desk behind the shop. He got it out and went over it carefully. For the next three days he was as busy as he could be going to and fro among the men whose names were on the list. The League boys could not make out what he was doing, but they felt very uneasy. By way of pacifying Peter they collected all the cattle that had been driven, and put them back on the widow's farm. They mended the fences they had broken and told the woman they were sorry about the mistake they had made. But Peter was not pacified in the least, and it was soon discovered what he was doing.

The men who had been boycotted formed a new League of their own, with Peter as President, and they met every evening in Peter's public-house, all of them except Daniel O'Sullivan and his three sons, who said that they had no better opinion of the new League than they had of the old one. But without them there were sixty members of the new League, every one of them a man who had a boycott put on him and was feeling bitter about it. They spent three evenings talking over their plan of action, and every day some of the members of the old League resigned their position on it, until there were not more than eight of them left altogether. Then the new League boycotted them, and the first thing they knew was that Peter refused to supply them with drink when they went into his shop. This was not much loss to Peter, for the whole eight of them owed him so much for drink already, that he would not have given them any more credit, even if they had not been boycotted.

At the next meeting of the Urban District Council, Peter made a fine speech. He said that he was just as much in favour of the policy of the land for the people as he had ever been; but that the fellows who had formed the old League were not really people at all. They were disreputable corner-boys, who had no right to expect land, and would not know what to do with it if they had it. He said that they had brought disgrace on the neighbourhood by their behaviour,

and laid a heavy burden on the ratepayers, for we should all have to pay for the extra police who had been drafted into the town to stop the cattle-driving. This was the first most of us had heard about the addition to the rates on account of the extra police. We were not inclined to believe it until Peter assured us that there was no doubt about it at all. The Urban District Council passed a resolution at once, saying that the police were not wanted, because the neighbourhood was in a position of profound tranquillity. Peter, as leading man in the locality, undertook to write a letter to the Chief Secretary, giving his personal guarantee that any boycotting that was done by the new League would be done in a peaceable and constitutional manner, and only to men who really deserved it. He promised to point out that there could be no more cattle-driving, because the members of the old League did not own any cattle, except a pig or two in a back-yard, that nobody would take the trouble to drive.

After the meeting of the Council was over, Peter went home and told his wife to clean out the shop thoroughly, and wash out every tumbler in the house, so that the members of the new League would be able to conduct their business in comfort and decency.

This just shows what nonsense it is to talk about Irishmen being such fools as to allow their politics to interfere with their business. A good business man

THE PUBLICAN

THE PUBLICAN

is one who makes money, and Peter Fogarty did that. He made a good sum out of the League which wanted to get the land and started the boycotting. He made a comfortable sum out of the Government, which did not care whether the people got the land or not, but wanted the boycotting stopped. He made the most out of the new League which wanted the people to keep the land they had, and only boycotted those who were trying to take it from them. I do not say that all the publicans in Ireland are as smart as Peter Fogarty; but they are none of them fools, and it is a gross slander to say that they are not good business men because they take an intelligent interest in politics.

CHAPTER NINE
THE EXILE FROM ERIN

CHAPTER IX THE EXILE FROM ERIN

THERE IS A KIND OF PICTURE, FAIRLY common in all exhibitions, which can only be admired by a spectator who stands a long way off. If you are near it you do not see a picture at all, only a lot of little blobs of different-coloured paint sticking up on the canvas, in shape like the wavelets in a place where two strong tides meet. When you go further away these little blobs of paint begin to remind you uneasily of something, though at first you cannot tell what. When you get a long way off the blobs of paint disappear and you find yourself looking at a picture of a beautiful garden, perhaps, full of all sorts of gay and delightful flowers; or, if the artist was in another mood, you have a cloudy moon shining upon a troubled sea. Ireland is a picture painted in that manner. If you live in Ireland you are aware of a lot of men working very sensibly in a number of different ways, earning money, which they spend on food for themselves and clothes for their wives, talking about the weather, the price of cattle, and the scandalous way in which railway companies oppress the public. These men do not fall into any particular pattern. Nor do they seem connected with each other except by the ordinary ties of friendship, rivalry, or community of interest. When you get a long way off from Ireland you lose sight of all these funny, busy little men, and see instead Kathaleen ní Houlahan, if you happen to have been reading Mangan's poetry, or the Shan van

Vogh if you indulge in patriotic songs. London is the nearest place from which a person of normal vision can see Kathaleen ní Houlahan. Short-sighted people do not have to go so far away. Very short-sighted people even see her from Dublin sometimes; but we may safely assert that the inhabitants of places like Athlone and Mullingar only see Irishmen, not Ireland.

In order to be really patriotic you must be able to see Kathaleen ní Houlahan. That is why members of Parliament who spend most of their time in London are more patriotic than ordinary Irishmen who live at home; and why the exiles from Erin whose whole lives are spent in London are far the most patriotic Irishmen there are. It is only members of Parliament and permanent exiles who can talk splendidly and sing sweetly about the Dark Rosaleen, Shiela the Daughter of Gara, and the Dear Dark Head. The rest of us flush uncomfortably when called upon to apostrophise these beautiful figures. We cannot help thinking about our friend Flanagan, who is an excellent fellow in every way, but chiefly anxious to get a good price for his pigs; or poor old Dogherty, who is spreading his nets in the hope of catching grey mullet. Neither of them inspires us to rhetoric, though both of them are dear and thoroughly worthy men. From the vision of the Exile from Erin Flanagan and Dogherty have disappeared. They are no longer, as they are to

us, little individual blobs of paint. They have vanished along with a thousand other Flanagans and Dogherties, and have become part of a portrait of a woman, old or young, but always romantic.

It is therefore very good for Irishmen to go to London often and stay there as long as they can. All great national celebrations, St Patrick's Day Banquet, and such-like festivals, should be and are held in London. They would lose half their meaning and fail of their purpose if they were held here, in Limerick, for instance. The banqueters in Limerick, when the good red wine had warmed their hearts and the time of speech-making arrived, would only talk about the price of store cattle or the annoying nature of the Insurance Act, which would be no use at all. What is wanted at banquets—and indeed everywhere else —is not common sense but patriotism, and that you cannot get without going to London.

Consider our members of Parliament. The Exile from Erin, the London Irishman, admires our members of Parliament and respects them deeply. To him they are a band of patriots, stern, earnest men, fighting a lonely battle for their dear native land in the midst of an alien assembly, scorning the temptation of Sassenach gold, clinging with grim persistency, through good report and evil, to the glorious idea of nationality. The Exile sees them that way because he is far enough off to appreciate the picture of Kath-

aleen ní Houlahan. In Ireland people are inclined to close one eye facetiously at the mention of a member of Parliament. That is because they see Flanagan and Dogherty, not the picture: and the member of Parliament about whom they are thinking is just another Dogherty or a Flanagan who has had the luck to get his livelihood without having to drag young pigs to the fair or toil in the early morning at damp nets.

A London Irishman who is as patriotic as they all are, and also very clever—he wrote articles in a Liberal paper, so he must have been very clever—once came to Ireland for six weeks' holiday. I happened to meet him, and asked him what he thought of us all now he had actually seen us.

"Well," he said, "nothing has astonished me more than the low opinion you all seem to have of——"

Here he named a very great member of Parliament.

"Oh," I said, "you've been talking to people about him, have you?"

"Yes," he said, "and I find that nobody in Ireland thinks much of him. Now we——"

He paused. I felt that he needed encouragement.

"You're sure to be right," I said. "Do tell us what you think of him."

"We regard him as a great statesman," he said; "and if we only had him to lead the Liberal Party we could——"

Here his voice faded away and his eyes took a far-off ecstatic look. He was thinking, I fancy, that everybody would have an Old Age Pension of a pound a week on reaching the age of thirty-five if only —— were the leader of the Liberal Party.

"You can have him if you like," I said. "We're not selfish."

He looked at me sorrowfully, as a really good man looks at an impenitent sinner.

"Ah no," he said. "Ireland needs him, and Ireland must come first with all of us."

I had no more to say after that. I went away ashamed. A week later—we were then on the verge of a General Election—I met the chief organiser of our local branch of the League. He is, of course, a very important person, especially at election times, so I took off my hat to him and greeted him with a humble bow. He was graciously pleased to smile at me, and I began to talk about the election.

"I suppose," I said, "that we're going to elect Q again for this division."

Q, who lives somewhere in the English Midlands, and I believe sells butter, has represented us for a great many years.

"We are not, then," said the organiser. "The man we're going to have this time is Z."

"Dear me," I said, "I always thought Q was an excellent man. Has he done anything wrong?"

"It's not what them ones does or doesn't do that matters."

"You oughtn't to talk in that way," I replied. "I feel strongly that Ireland needs Q, and Ireland must come first in our hearts."

He looked at me, and I could see by the expression of his face that he thought I had been drinking. He remained, however, quite polite, and was good enough to explain the situation to me.

"What we say is this," he said. "When there's a job going we ought to give it to one of our own."

Z is a local man, and has, if one may quote the language of the police court, "no visible means of support."

These two conversations illustrate the difference between the exiled Irishman and the Irishman at home. The one takes a high patriotic view of politics and politicians. The other does not. And the difference is apparent in all sorts of other ways.

I have a friend called Desmond O'Donoghue who lives in London. Before he went there he was just an ordinary Irishman like the rest of us, with a very fairly well-developed sense of humour. London—he has now lived there for nearly ten years—has changed him greatly. He has become immensely serious, and more patriotic than anyone else I have ever met. He often spends a whole evening, quite happily, in listening to somebody else reading a paper on the poetry of

Mr W. B. Yeats, and a man who can do that can do anything. I doubt very much whether Mr Yeats himself could sit through a paper on his own poetry written by an earnest young man. Desmond O'Donoghue does it without either yawning or swearing. He believes that appreciations of Mr Yeats' genius are exceedingly important things, and he looks down upon anyone who gets bored by such compositions as a West Briton, which is several degrees worse than being a Philistine. It is now almost seven years since Desmond O'Donoghue has seen a joke, and more than eight years since he has made one. He cannot understand how people can see anything funny about six young men and five young women gathering in a small room in a house in Chelsea to discuss the relationship between the genius of Mr W. B. Yeats and the soul of Pagan Ireland. He does not want to smile when he sees a young woman in a tea-gown sitting on the floor instead of the chair with which providence has provided her, and allowing a flabby cigarette to droop from the corners of her lips so as to express more forcibly her ideas about the genius of Mr W. B. Yeats and the philosophy of the Tuath da Danaan priests.

Desmond O'Donoghue is very fond of talking about Movements. He often discovers Movements where nobody else could suspect the existence of such things. In Ireland we move, of course—chiefly round and round; but we never discover that our moving is a

real Movement until Desmond O'Donoghue or somebody like him tells us that it is. When we do find it out, we are, of course, greatly pleased. We sometimes dance, for instance, though not very much or very often, and in dancing we indubitably move. Desmond O'Donoghue read a paper—in return for the one about Mr W. B. Yeats—on the inner meaning of the Movement for Reviving Irish Dancing. I happened to be in London at the time, and he invited me to go and listen to his paper. I refused, because I do not want to fall out with Desmond O'Donoghue, and I nearly always do fall out with anyone who bores me excessively. The paper, so he told me afterwards, was an immense success and had quite important consequences. Several members of the audience asked Mr Desmond O'Donoghue to start a school of Irish dancing in London. He did so, and for nearly three months several men and women used to go once a week to O'Donoghue's rooms and try, very seriously and earnestly, to learn to dance jigs, all for the love of Kathaleen ní Houlahan. That, at least, was their remote, ultimate motive. Their immediate reasons for learning to dance differed a good deal. There were two young men, both convinced and outspoken atheists, who had got into their heads an idea that the Irish priests were trying to put a stop to dancing because it was injurious to faith and morals. They hoped to do something towards breaking the power of the Church

by becoming expert jig-dancers. They gave up in the end because they found Irish dances so very decorous that no real good could be done by reviving them.

Sharply distinguished from them was a young lady, originally an Irish Protestant of uncompromising parentage, who became a Roman Catholic when she went to London because she felt that it was a beautiful thing to share the faith of the Irish people. She practised jig-dancing in O'Donoghue's rooms, hoping in that way to get into touch with fairies. She was intensely earnest about fairies, and once told me that belief in them was really part of the Catholic faith, because it was so much older than Christianity. She did not, of course, call her little pets fairies. That would have been vulgar, English, almost Protestant. She spoke of them as the "Good People," and sometimes as "Shee." In the end she married, not one of the atheists, but a young Irish journalist who also went to the dancing-classes. The last time I met her she had two babies and had given up both jigs and fairies. She was, however, able to see auras, pink and blue, round her babies' heads, and this was a great comfort to her. She said that only true Gaels had "the sight," and that "the Church" was really Gaelic and not Roman, because it was so beautiful. She used to have eight bottles full of water from a Holy Well posted to her by a friend, and bathed her babies in it at Samhain time. She was an unusually good-looking young

lady, with amber eyes, dark red hair, but rather a floppy figure.

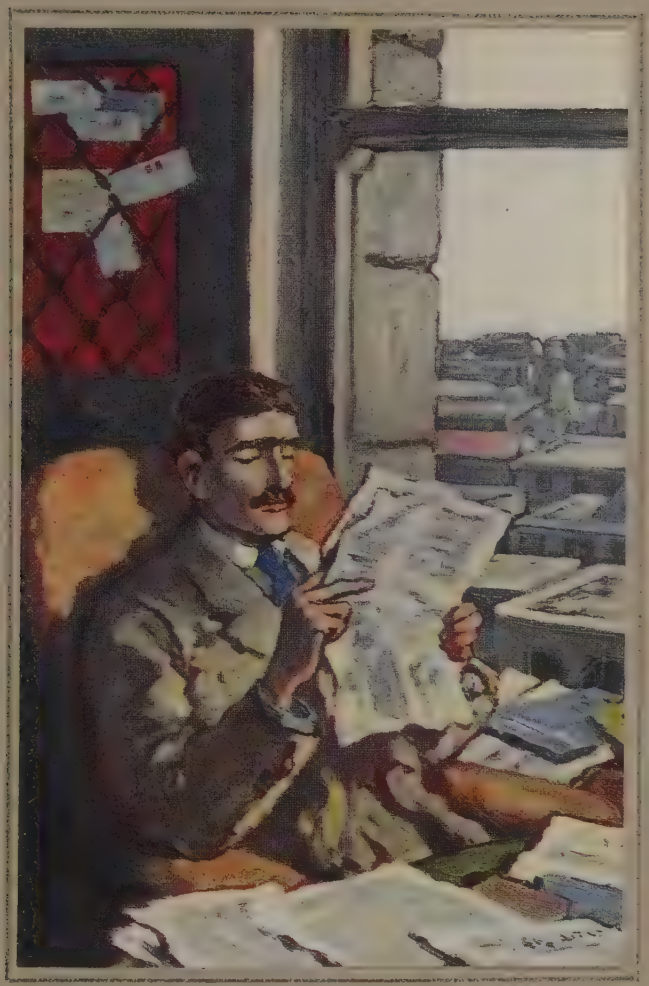
Her husband, the journalist, went to O'Donoghue's dancing-class at first because he was the London correspondent of an Irish paper, and thought he might get some copy of an original kind about the progress of the Irish Movement in London. He was new to England at that time, and had not yet got his eyes focussed to the pictures of Kathaleen ní Houlahan. He got very little copy, but he went on attending the dances for the sake of the young lady with the amber eyes. Now he is quite as solemn as she is and quite as patriotic as O'Donoghue. It was he who said to me, apropos of the member of Parliament who might have been the leader of the Liberal Party, that Ireland must always come first with all of us.

Desmond O'Donoghue's patriotism is expressed in many ways. He by no means confines himself to appreciating Mr Yeats and starting dancing-classes. He is, for instance, greatly interested in the Irish Industrial Revival. He smokes Irish cigarettes, which are very good indeed, if you happen to like that kind of cigarette. O'Donoghue does not, but he smokes them for patriotic reasons, and hopes to get inured to them in time. Once, I believe, the people of an Italian city gave up smoking cigarettes altogether for a time in order to free their country from foreign rule. That was a very noble thing to do; but I think

O'Donoghue's action is nobler still. It must be easier to stop smoking than to smoke tobacco with a flavour which is disagreeable to you. O'Donoghue lights those cigarettes with Irish matches. There is no real hardship about using an Irish match, once you have got it. It strikes as readily as any other match, and there are quite as many in an ordinary box. O'Donoghue says there are more, and that the Irish match is therefore actually cheaper than that made in England or Germany. He once spent a long evening counting the matches in many different boxes, and, as well as I can recollect, there turned out to be more in the Irish box than any other; but O'Donoghue, when I cross-questioned him, admitted that when two matches had their heads stuck together in an English box he counted them as one match. I am not sure that this was quite fair; but then all statistics are deceitful, and the economy—in any case—would be inconsiderable. Even on O'Donoghue's showing there were only five extra matches in the Irish box, and you get two large boxes for a penny. It is therefore, economically, no real test of patriotism to use Irish matches, and O'Donoghue would deserve no credit for using them if it were not that he finds them difficult to get. He has to walk nearly a mile from his house before he reaches a shop which stocks Irish matches. He does this uncomplainingly, and carries home two dozen boxes at a time. This tends to make him a little stingy

about matches, and I am often put to great inconvenience when spending the evening with him if my pipe goes out. I cannot bear to see him eyeing me when I take a second match from his box, and once I made a spill of a valuable paper which I had in my pocket rather than annoy him. In every other respect O'Donoghue is the most generous of men. He would not grudge me a whole bottle of Irish whisky if I wanted it. Irish whisky is one of the few things manufactured in Ireland which can be bought without difficulty everywhere.

Profane people—those who have not seen the vision of Kathaleen ní Houlahan—are sometimes tempted to laugh at O'Donoghue, and I know a man who openly scoffs at what he calls "the policy of regenerating Ireland by dancing jigs and wearing yellow trousers." But it is not right to mock at self-denying efforts and serious convictions. I never even smile at O'Donoghue now, partly because he hates all kinds of smiling and I do not wish to give him pain, and partly, also, because I once caught him in the act of doing a thing so brave that I have been admiring him, gravely, ever since. O'Donoghue is a very handsome man, so handsome that a lady, who wrote poetry, once said to me that he had the head and form of an old Greek god. A man like that likes to make the best of his natural advantages, and O'Donoghue has always gone to a good tailor. In London—so I understand



THE EXILE FROM ERIN

—first-rate tailors are somewhat autocratic in their dealings with their customers, and O'Donoghue's man declined to make clothes out of material manufactured in Ireland. O'Donoghue's principles would not allow him to wear clothes made of anything else. I imagine that there was a good deal of argument, and in the end the tailor seems to have committed himself to the statement that there was no cloth made in Ireland which was suitable for dress coats. Then O'Donoghue had him on the hip. He sent to Ireland and got a whole bale of fine black cloth. He had a great deal of difficulty in getting it, because the Irishman who made it was exceedingly unwilling to part with more than about an inch of it at a time; but difficulties are nothing to O'Donoghue. He wrangled with the Irish manufacturer just as he wrangled with the English tailor, and in the end got a whole bale. He took this under his arm and went to call on his tailor. I met him getting out of a bus at Hyde Park Corner. He invited me to go with him and watch the discomfiture of the tailor. I walked all along Piccadilly with him, and even took a turn at carrying the bale of cloth; but my courage failed me at the last moment. I turned away from that tailor's door. O'Donoghue went in alone. If there ever is an Irish Republic, O'Donoghue ought to be given whatever order it establishes for the reward of courage—the Grand Star of Fin ma Coul, perhaps. No one, I am sure, will ever do a braver deed

for Ireland than O'Donoghue's. But he may not in the end get the star, for only those who have been subdued by the manners of first-rate tailors can fully appreciate O'Donoghue's courage, and very few of us can afford the luxury of being snubbed in that particular way.

There is, so far as I can find out, only one thing which O'Donoghue will not do for Ireland; and that is, live there. But we must not blame him for that. Unlimited patriotism is too much to expect from any man.

It is not every Irishman living in London who is like O'Donoghue. There are numbers of them, too many perhaps, who seldom or never deliver lectures on our poetry, who make no attempt to dance jigs, who submit to their tailors and smoke the tobacco they like, who have no great seriousness of purpose, who are probably good at seeing jokes. But these are not Exiles from Erin. They are merely ordinary Irishmen like the rest of us. They happen, unfortunately for themselves, to live in England.

CHAPTER TEN
THE PARISH PRIEST

CHAPTER TEN THE PARISH PRIEST

A VERY CLEVER LADY ONCE TOLD ME that the divisions between the various kinds of Christians in England depended for their existence greatly on social feeling and very little on dogmatic convictions. According to her view, the Nonconformist minister has no particular objection to being governed by a bishop or to wearing a surplice, but does very much resent not being asked to dinner by the squire. The wife and daughters of the dissenting shopkeepers would actually enjoy arranging flowers on an altar, but they will only do it for a clergyman whose wife will take tea with them. The shopkeeper himself likes to be able to patronise his own Levite, and the vicar, who has probably been to Oxford, is very likely to patronise him. Hence, according to my clever and charming friend, "our unhappy divisions."

The theory is disagreeably cynical: it casts a very unpleasant light on the character of the clergy, and historically is not true. Odd as it may seem to us, the original Puritan did actually regard a surplice as a rag of Popery, and a bishop as a kind of spiritual wolf. I pointed this out to my friend, and she admitted that I might be right about the Nonconformists of the seventeenth century. She stuck to it that she was right about their descendants in the twentieth. I was not prepared to argue with her. I know nothing about English religious affairs. She knew a great deal, for she served on some kind of educational coun-

cil or committee which was perpetually coming up against the zealots of all bodies. I have no such experience; but I know that social ambition is one of the strongest passions which rend the human heart, and that a social slight is more bitterly resented than almost any other kind of injury. It seems to me quite possible that in a country where strong dogmatic conviction is rare, social jealousy may account for the desire for disestablishment and the determination not to allow children to be taught the Apostles' Creed.

I am even inclined to think that the same feeling, in a slightly different form, is often a factor in the decision between the rival claims of Canterbury and Rome. The published confessions of at least one convert and the private remarks of others lead me to suppose that one of the attractions of Romanism is the desire of recognition by those who are regarded as a kind of ecclesiastical aristocracy. The Anglican priest who suffers because his priesthood is not recognised by a Cardinal is in much the same mental condition as the wife of a draper whose claim to gentility is ignored by the lady of the neighbouring archdeacon. The slighted priest is, of course, in rather the better position of the two. If his feeling of resentment becomes intolerable, he can make his submission, be re-ordained, and enter the charmed circle. The poor draper's wife has not any remedy. There is no possibility of conversion for her. Even if she

abjure the horrors of shopkeeping, she will not be invited to the next garden-party at the Manor House.

These, however, are purely English speculations. In Ireland we still believe that some creeds are true, and others not only false but highly dangerous and objectionable. No member of the Church of Ireland, one may safely assert, ever yet became a Roman Catholic from motives of ecclesiastical snobbery. He is not tempted to get into good society—good spiritual society—by joining "the Church of all the saints." If you convinced him of the truth of the curious claim implied in the phrase, he would simply have a lower opinion of saints from that day forward. He would not want to associate with them any more than he did before. And no Irish Roman Catholic has of recent years deserted his Church because the majority of what are called the upper classes in Ireland refuse to recognise the parish priest as a social equal.

But Irish people, even though they still believe creeds of various kinds, are after all human beings. They do not enjoy social snubs any more than the English enjoy them, and they do, in moments when their baser natures are strong, rather like administering social snubs to other people. It is, of course, vain for the Roman priest in Ireland to assume that air of ecclesiastical gentility which his English brethren find effective. The Irish Protestant remains unimpressed. He has a gentility of his own of a totally dif-

ferent kind in which he wraps himself as with a garment. The Roman secular priests do not as a rule spring from the upper, or even the middle classes. The Irish Church rector, whatever his father may have been, does, in virtue of his office, dine with the landlord of the parish.

The possession by the clergy of one Church of this kind of social superiority is, no doubt, a galling thing. The fact of disestablishment has not altered it in the least. The State, indeed, no longer recognises the Church of Ireland clergy, but "society" does, and the Irish Roman Catholic priest finds himself in the same sort of position as the English Dissenter. It is greatly to the credit of the priest that only some of them are moved to any bitter resentment. Many of them are satisfied with the reality of political power and are willing to smile at the loss of the shadow of social recognition. Others, no doubt, are men of magnanimity and attach no real importance to the matter. But others again are exceedingly touchy on the article of their gentility. It is altogether natural and excusable that they should be. Are not their coats as black and their hats as glossy as those of any clergy in the world? Is the culture derivable from Maynooth less wide than that of the ordinary graduate of Trinity College, Dublin? Is not the horse in the Presbytery stable a superior beast to the rector's cob? The position of the clergy of the Irish Church must often ap-

pear like that of the impoverished spinster of gentle birth who holds aloof from the well-dressed, vivacious wife of some new-rich man. Her attitude is based on no rational theory of life, and yet there it is, a barrier against which wealth, power, and strong vitality beat in vain. Social exclusiveness and social ambition, if not answerable for our religious divisions, certainly do account for some of our religious bitterness.

A few years ago a novel was published in which the Roman Catholic priests in Ireland were criticised, mildly enough indeed, but in plain language. One particular priest, a man of great gentility but humble origin, took it into his head that he was the prototype of one of the characters in the book. The idea was a wholly mistaken one, but the poor man suffered just as much as if he really had been "put into a book." He was exceedingly angry with the author, not because he was represented as unfaithful or immoral, but because his dinner-table was described, so he thought, as more remarkable for the hospitable abundance of the food on it, than for its elegance. This was impossible to bear. Accusations of a different kind did not really matter. The assumption on the part of the author of superior knowledge of the arts of genteel living was an insult which could not be forgiven. It was a question of whether it was gentlemanly or not to have a ham and a leg of mutton on the table at the same time. This priest was a man of great influence

in his locality, and for some time after the publication of that book the whole neighbourhood was swept with a wave of religious bitterness. Not one of all the Tridentine decrees had been treated irreverently. There was no suggestion in the book that the Pope's destiny hereafter was likely to be other than quite happy. The trouble arose from a supposed social slight. Did an ordinary parish priest arrange his meals according to the conventions of the gentry? And yet a ham and a leg of mutton, if you are hungry enough, are certainly preferable to a ham alone. Even the Lord Lieutenant—and there is no one in Ireland superior socially to the Lord Lieutenant—would admit that.

This kind of social soreness does exist in Ireland, and accounts for a certain amount of religious bitterness. But there is not much of it, and, in comparison with England, if my friend is to be trusted, it is not of real importance. It is only here and there that you meet a priest who suffers from this sort of jealousy. It is only now and then that you find a Protestant clergyman who would be unwilling to associate with a Roman Catholic priest from any feeling of social superiority.

The fact that the secular priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church is mainly recruited from the peasant class is to most priests a source of pride and gratification. It is no more than ordinary politeness to assume that this is so, for the priests themselves are

continually saying it, and I should not like to think that they said what they did not mean. It is, in any case, a very valuable asset for the order. Somebody —was it Mr George Moore, or did he only quote it? —once said that the most wonderful thing the Irish priests have ever done is to persuade the world that they are the friends of the Irish people. They could not, I think, have done this if they were not able to produce a good deal of solid evidence in support of the theory. There is such evidence. In the old evil days of the land war, now happily almost passed away, the parish priest was often the only adviser the people had who was both honest and educated. It is impossible even to guess the amount of good which simple unknown parish priests did in those bad times. Very often their influence was the single one which held back desperate men from desperate deeds. But for them the struggle of the Land League days might well have been ten times bloodier than it was. Very often, too, their influence must have redeemed half-hearted men from utter cowardice. It is forgotten sometimes that the Irish tenants took great risks in the early days of the fight, and required high courage to fight at all. Nowadays we have become accustomed to the bombastic talk of men who risk nothing and never intend to suffer the smallest inconvenience. We discount the froth of platform oratory, and, except when trying to make political points to an English

audience, we attach no importance to whirling words. We know that there were always talkers and that they never mean half they say. We do not remember that the first attack on Irish feudalism required great courage in the rank and file. And courage of this kind is no common virtue. I have no doubt that it was very often the priest who strengthened the weak hands and confirmed the feeble knees of those who were of their own class, their own kith and kin. It is small wonder that they have won from the Irish people a gratitude which survives, and that the memory of past services makes men ready to submit to a great deal which, without such memories, would be intolerable.

And to-day—when the war is over—there are many priests who are doing the same kind of unselfish work among their people. In *Father Ralph*, a novel recently published, written by Gerald O'Donovan, we have a whole series of portraits of Irish priests; among them one, Father Duff, stands out prominently. Everyone who knows rural Ireland knows some priests of this type. They are men of strong practical common sense, rarely the victims of spiritual snobbishness or political claptrap. They have the interests of their people sincerely at heart, and are prepared to risk the frowns of those who are rich and powerful in Ireland now, for the sake of doing the best for their parishes, just as their predecessors in bygone days faced the

wrath of the landlord aristocracy. Father Duff, in Mr O'Donovan's book, established and supported the system of agricultural co-operation in his parish, though he made himself unpopular with many highly placed priests by doing so, and involved himself in a struggle with the money-lending shopkeepers who "bossed" the local League. He gave sound and disinterested advice to those who needed it. He was a sincere and loyal friend, even though it were to his own hindrance. He was entirely reliable and straightforward. And Father Duff was entirely true to type. There are many priests to-day, all over Ireland, who are living and working just as he did.

There is no way of estimating the value to the community of priests like these, but we may take a single example of their usefulness—Irish land is rapidly passing from the possession of the old landlord to that of the farmers. The sale of every estate is a matter of bargaining immensely complicated by the existence in some districts of large tracts of untenanted land. On the one side is the landlord, naturally and rightly anxious to get the full value of his property. On the other side are a number of tenants, very acute where their own interests are concerned, often very greedy, always liable to be misled by irresponsible talkers into expecting more than they can possibly get. Between the two is the priest, capable of a detached view, understanding what is pos-

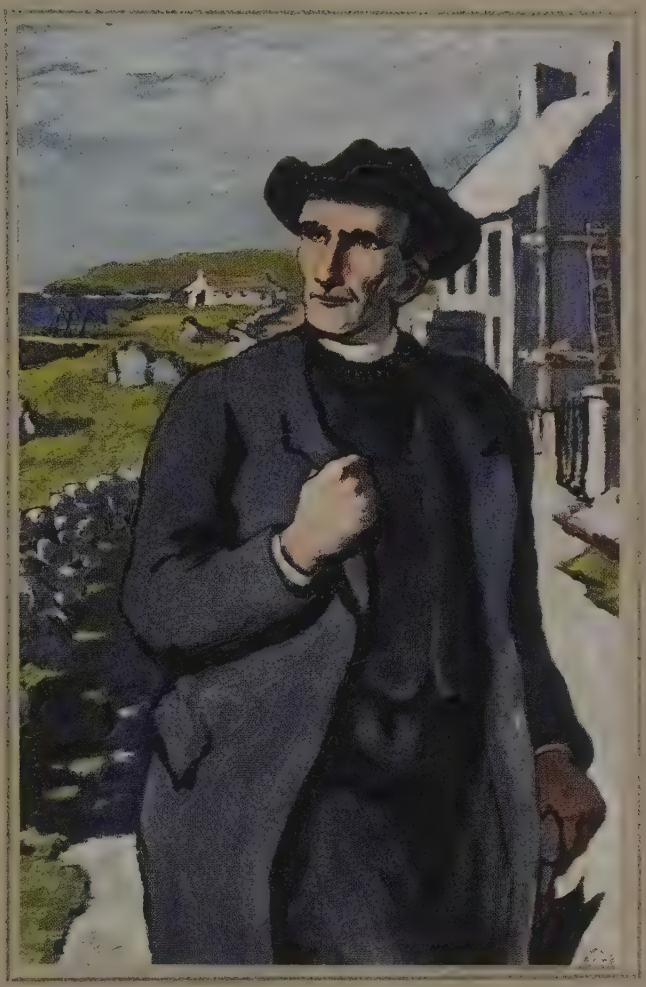
sible and what is not, anxious both for peace and the economic welfare of his people. The work which priests have often done in these moments of acute crisis is not showy, but is often very valuable.

The opinion is commonly held by members of the governing classes that any rupture between the Roman Catholic clergy and their people, any serious weakening of the priestly influence, would be an unmitigated misfortune for Ireland. From the point of view of the statesman the opinion is sound. Ireland to-day without the Roman Catholic priests would present an enormous difficulty to any Government, English or Irish. And we may safely say this, that while old memories survive, and as long as there are many priests like Mr O'Donovan's Father Duff, the ties which attach the people to their clergy are not likely to be broken. Protestant propagandism has been a failure. The Irish country-people are too profoundly uninterested in religious thought to be affected by Modernist ideas. Secularism is making slow progress, if any, and only in towns. Indifferentism and religious apathy do not affect the relations of clergy and people, so long as the priest proves himself to be a wise friend and adviser in secular matters.

But Father Duff is not the only type of priest in Mr O'Donovan's book. There is also a Father Molloy, and he too, unfortunately, is a justly drawn figure. Those who know Ireland recognise him as surely as

they recognise the other. The man is essentially a bully. He finds himself in possession of a power which no tradition of the class from which he sprang has fitted him to use, which his education has in no way prepared him to endure nobly. The least opposition to his will, the mildest criticism of his action, makes him furious. His acts, like those of all bullies, are violent. The language in which he boasts of them is coarse. He is greedy of personal gain, and avaricious for the enrichment, not of his Church, for the poor are his Church, but of the corporation which manages his Church's affairs. In the name of the Church he levies intolerable taxes. In the name of purity he establishes a tyranny for crushing the joy of life, distorting humanity in the twisted mirror of a prurient puritanism. In the name of God, in the name of the gentle Jesus, he inflicts savage blows on women and children. After the manner of all bullies he cringes to the rich and strong. He can be crafty as well as violent, and the same man who will kick a defenceless creature in the street will stand hat in hand suavely complaisant before a high official from whom he hopes to gain some fresh power, some new influence. He is impervious to any sense of the ridiculous. He is capable of saying that Ireland is "at the present time being daily douched in a cataract of English literary filth" when he means that Sunday newspapers are on sale in Dublin. "Are we," he asks, "to extend a

friendly hand to those apologists of adultery, those promoters of the brothel, whose object is to popularise the vice of Babylon and the foulness of Sodom and Gomorrah?" And he cannot be got to see that he is a great though quite unconscious comedian. It is men of this type who constitute the real danger to the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. They are a new type. A few years ago they could not have existed. The Protestant aristocracy possessed a power which rivalled and curbed theirs in secular affairs. It is the fall of that aristocracy which has made them possible. It is not hard to understand how they come to be what they are. The singular isolation of their lives has left all the evil in them free to develop terribly. The training of a large public school would have saved them. They are reared in seminaries. The social life of a university would have taught them humanity. They did not get it. Free intercourse with men on terms of equality would have helped them to common sense. They are denied it. The existence of a freely critical Irish literature would hold them in check; but the Irish literary movement is lyrical in spirit rather than critical, and nearly everyone in Ireland is afraid to laugh. It is only since yesterday that these priests have existed. It is only till to-morrow that they can survive. But the business of getting rid of them, if the number of them increases, may very well shake our social order to its foundation.



THE PARISH PRIEST

It is plain, however, that in discussing a priesthood social usefulness or social harmfulness is not the real question. The most important thing about any body of clergy is their religion. A priest does not exist for the purpose of smoothing the creases out of economic problems, though statesmen may thank him for such work. It is only by the way that he acts as the apostle of better business methods and a higher standard of living. Social reformers may set, and ought to set, a high value on the help he gives them. But this is not his own, his peculiar work. He is not necessarily a good priest because he does it. Nor, on the other hand, is he necessarily a bad priest because statesmen regard him as dangerous.

A priesthood exists to interpret God to men and bring Him near to them. The vital question about any priesthood is this: Have the men who compose it beheld, even far off and dimly, the Heavenly Vision? Are their lives lived, like St Paul's, in obedience to it? Here we touch an enormously difficult question, one to which it is very hard for anyone, impossible for one who is outside, to give an assured answer. Of the obedience of priests to the promulgated laws of an organised society like a Church it is easy to speak certainly. Of their faithfulness to creeds and dogmas declared to be binding on them it is possible to form some opinion. Of the morality, outward and obvious, of their lives there is little difficulty in making an es-

timate. But these are not the most important matters.

"Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done that took the eye and had their price;
Or which from level stand
The low world laid its hand
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice.
But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger could not plumb
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.
Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped. . . ."

It is these and not the others that really matter.

How are we to estimate this side of the character of the Irish priests? Can we estimate it at all? I confess that I shrink from making the attempt. But of this I feel sure, that the stability and strength of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland depend upon her having among her priests a large number of men of the Spirit. If she has enough of them, neither the progress of human knowledge, nor the appalling intellectual difficulties raised by the doctrines she teaches, nor the evil practices of unworthy men, nor even the policy of her own rulers, can destroy her. The souls of men, in spite of all hindrances, will turn to those from whom they can receive the unction from on high; and

if this Church ceases to attract men of this kind into her priesthood, or, having got them, hates and disowns them, then wealth, political power, and perfection of organisation will only hasten the inevitable end.

No man can wholly escape from his environment, and I think it is the fault of the spirit which is abroad in Ireland to-day that I find myself writing about priests in this solemn and futile way. We are all taking ourselves very seriously indeed, and have got into the way of treating people and things as problems. It used not to be so with us. Only a few years ago it was possible for Mr Alfred Graves to write a cheerful song about a priest. Who would dare do so now?

> "You may talk of your Provost and Fellows of Trinity,
> Famed the world over for Greek and Latinity,
> Faith! and the divil's in all their divinity,
> Father O'Flynn 'd make hares of them all!"

Is it no longer possible to treat divinity as a subject for triple rhyming? We love and hate far too intensely to allow of our thinking of a priest as doing anything so jolly as "making hares" of opposing controversialists. And before Mr Graves' time things were even worse, more profanely light-hearted. Who can forget the rollicking priests of Lever's novels? We read of them and laugh and love. Who laughs now on such a subject? Our poets and other men of letters insist that we shall be solemn as the grave: sol-

emn in our diatribes against the shadowing influence of priestly power, solemn in our sentimentalising over the virtues of some "soggarth aroon." No doubt this is the better way; but it is surely allowable to regret the passing of the old spirit. Perhaps one may even rejoice, secretly of course, in the fact that human nature has a way of ignoring literary fashion, and that there is a good deal of human nature left in the Irish priests. Poets and novelists insist on our thinking of priests as saints or devils. Politicians, apostles of "causes" and reforms of every kind, insist on trying to rope priests into their enclosures. But the human priest survives. I like to think of him as a man with a kindly sympathy for human weakness, not over anxious that everyone should sign pledges of one kind or another, charitable without any theories about pauperisation, capable of laughing at a good story, eager when his turn comes to tell a better one. Out of the fulness of a ripe experience of life he is smilingly tolerant of most enthusiasms. The greater part of mankind does not want to be hauled untimely into heaven, and is always a little doubtful whether the heavens promised us by our various apostles are really abodes of delight. It is comfortable to find that the ordinary priest has something in him of the ordinary man, that ginger is "hot in his mouth," and, in spite of the very virtuous, he is not over anxious that "there shall be no more cakes and ale."

THE PARISH PRIEST

Unfortunately, the merely human priest does not strike the popular imagination. He exists. His eyes twinkle pleasantly into the eyes of those who know him, but they only twinkle in the privacy of friendly company. On public occasions they must look as solemnly fishlike as everybody else's. High authority frowns at him, because high authority is pitifully in earnest and cannot bear to think that anybody finds more health in quiet chuckling than in the exploiting of causes. Literature ignores him, because literature is so desperately afraid of the reproach of following Charles Lever that it will not recognise the existence of cheerfulness. But he plays his part in the life of Ireland, and it is pleasant to think that he survives, a witness to the old tradition of Irish good-fellowship.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE "MINISTER"

CHAPTER ELEVEN THE "MINISTER"

I SEE HAROLD BURNABY OCCASIONally, very occasionally, when he calls on me in Dublin. I see him oftener when I go down for a few weeks' fishing or a few days' rough shooting to that remote little Western parish of his. When I think of him, I think of him there: with his coat off, working in his garden on a spring morning, or, when an autumn afternoon is closing in, sitting over the fire in the dining-room of the little rectory. His wife is with him there. Alice—I have been privileged to call her Alice for many years—has grown a little grey lately and more than a little fat. But she still looks younger than many women who might be her daughters. It is, I suppose, its expression of content and solid, enduring happiness which makes her face like the face of a girl though she is well over sixty years of age. She is, I imagine, one of the best women in the world, and if ever anyone deserved happiness she does. I have known her almost as long as I have known her husband, and that is a matter, now, of forty-five years or so.

Harold Burnaby has not been very well treated by the world, fate, fortune, or whatever be the name of the power which shapes human destiny. Harold calls it Providence with unswerving faith and humility; but I should like to think better of Providence. The world has a bad name already; nobody ever had much to say in praise of fate or fortune; but Provi-

dence has a reputation for kindness, watchfulness, and justice. It is impossible to make Providence responsible for Harold Burnaby's position, without admitting that Providence is either feeble or careless. That, at least, is how the matter strikes me. Harold himself takes a different view. He says that Providence has been kind to him beyond his deserts, and has, in fact, given him the best things there are in life. His eyes have a look in them when he says this which reminds me of days very long ago when he used to come into my rooms in college and rave to me about Alice. Harold is, no doubt, thinking of Alice when he talks about the best things in life, and I admit that he has some excuse. Alice is—I have already said what I think about Alice. But there are many things in the world desirable besides Alices, and I do not think that Providence has in other respects been kind, or even tolerably just, to Harold.

He is a much better man than most of the men I meet. That is not saying much for him; but I can say more. He is, from a Christian point of view, a really good man. Providence ought, we may suppose, to take goodness into account when serving out the rewards of life. Yet Providence—I really prefer to say fortune or fate—has rewarded other people liberally and has left Harold with very little to show in the way of a prize, except, of course, Alice. But perhaps Providence does not go in for rewarding good

men; considers that goodness would be less good if it took rewards, certainly less good if it looked for them. That may be true, and yet I cannot help feeling that the contrast between the comparative prosperity of quite unworthy men and Harold's obscure poverty is too striking.

It is not even—here I leave Providence aside and say the world frankly. It is not even as if the world, with its usual cynical indifference to virtue, had rewarded the men I am thinking of for being cleverer than Harold or abler in the conduct of the business of life. As a matter of fact, Harold was, at the start, much cleverer than most of us. He beat most of his contemporaries again and again when he competed with them for prizes in college. He took a high, the highest possible, honour degree in classics. He had brains, capacity for work, and perseverance. He ought to have come to the front in life. If some men are judges, others have been honoured with minor titles, and others have accumulated comfortable fortunes. Harold ought to be a bishop. He is nothing of the sort.

He lives here in an utterly remote little rectory, twenty miles or more from a railway station. He has some forty scattered souls to look after. He has an income of about £180 a year. And that is all he ever will have or ever will be in this world. They will lay him, a few years hence, in a corner of his little church-

yard, and I do not suppose that any newspaper will publish an obituary notice of him or mention his death except in the columns in which the names of unimportant people are printed when they die, in return for a payment of three-and-sixpence.

The fact is that Harold got into a blind alley early in life and never found a way out of it. There was no way out, so he cannot be blamed for not finding one. It was Alice who pushed him into the impossible position. She spoiled his career, wrecked his chances, dragged him down, kept him down, did all the things a woman ought not to do to a man; but I have not the slightest doubt that if he had his life to live over again Harold would sacrifice his chance of a career and accept poverty and obscurity, accept them cheerfully, in order to have Alice with him. And I am inclined to think he would be right. A good dinner and a glass of sound claret are excellent things, and it is agreeable to feel sure of them every day. It is mere affectation to pretend to despise the convenience of belonging to a couple of clubs. To be able to take a little fishing somewhere in the West of Ireland, where fishing is not outrageously expensive, is a pleasant thing. I expect that the people who go in for being famous enjoy every leaf of their laurel wreaths and get solid satisfaction out of their second-rate little reputations. But Harold, who has missed all these things, may still possibly have the best of it. He has

succeeded in getting several other things which most men do not seem to care about, and, as I said, he has Alice.

Alice was an exceedingly pretty girl forty years ago, and Harold fell head over ears, hopelessly in love with her when he was a student in Trinity College. He was engaged to be married to her before he had finished his course in the Divinity School. She had not a penny of her own. Harold secured a curacy with an income of £120 a year. I believe they would have married on that income and laughed at the consequence; but Alice's mother forbade them. She was a widow who lived on an annuity of £200 a year. She had forgotten what love was, but she had a very clear and definite knowledge of the inconvenience of poverty. She refused to let her daughter face housekeeping and the possibility of babies on £120 a year. A few years later this miserable little West of Ireland living fell vacant. Harold heard of it somehow. Although he had only been four years in orders, he got it. I suppose there was no great competition for £180 a year and a small house; though £180 a year was more in those days than it is now. Taxes were not so high and living was not so dear. It was comparatively easy to live on a very small income then, for it had not occurred to any Chancellor of the Exchequer to improve the lot of the poor. At all events, £180 and a house seemed a competence to Harold and

Alice. They married joyfully.

There were babies, of course. I am godfather to the first, the fifth, and the seventh. I used to go down for the christenings, and I can vouch for the fact that Harold and Alice welcomed each baby as it came and rejoiced over it. This sounds incredible, but it is actually true, and I have no doubt they would have welcomed seventeen with equal rejoicing if there had been seventeen. There were only seven.

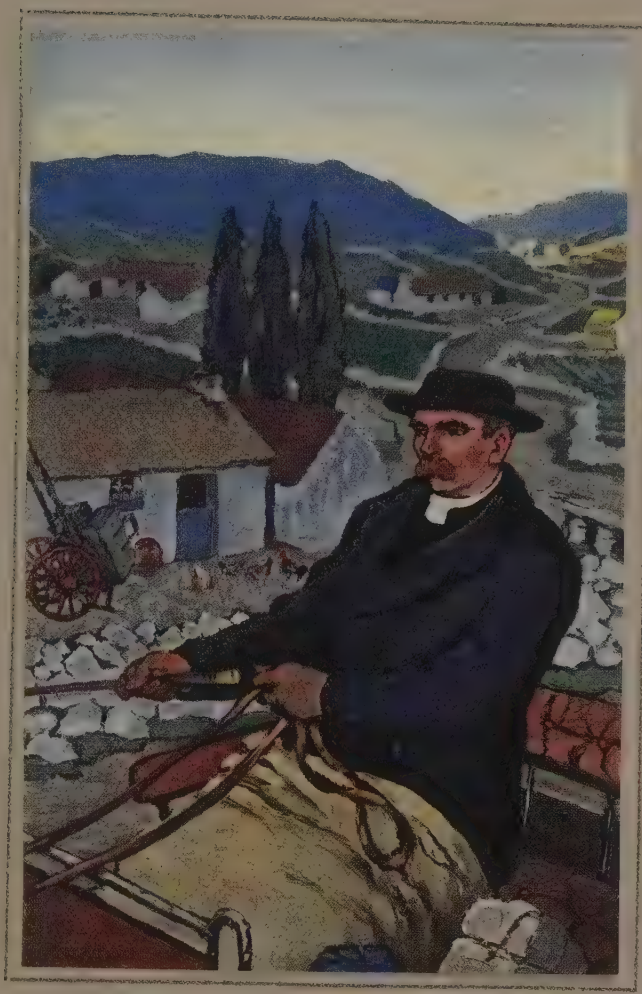
Ireland has more patriots in it than any other country in the world of the same size. In some places, Dublin for instance, there are so many patriots that they are actually tripping over each other in the streets. Everyone of them believes whole-heartedly and sincerely in some gospel for the regeneration of Ireland, most of them excellent gospels, good enough to regenerate a people far more decrepit than we are. When these patriots, who tend to congregate in Dublin, get tired of pointing out each other's mistakes and bored at having their own gospels misunderstood, they go down to the country to make converts. Some of them wander as far as the little village where the Burnabys live. There they make speeches on Sunday afternoons and listen to cheers, if their particular gospel is of the explosive political kind; or they hold long private colloquies with the parish priest if they believe in more insidious ways of regenerating Ireland. They do not, any of them, ever go near Harold

Burnaby. As a factor in Irish life he does not count. It is not worth while enrolling him in a League; and nobody asks for his opinion about a policy or his benediction on a movement. He is not supposed to have anything to do with Ireland, its decadence or regeneration. The fine new Ireland which we are all building up with such immense expenditure in printing, postage, and organisers' salaries will have no room in it for Harold Burnaby. He is, so to speak, a brick of the wrong shape. I suppose we shall, when the building is finished, cart him and men like him away and dump them down in rubbish-heaps.

Yet there are loose about various parts of Ireland seven young Burnabys, all of them grown men and women now. Harold and his wife begat, bore, reared, educated, formed these seven. And they are all more or less of the same type. They tell the truth. They have an instinct for duty. They say their prayers. They get through a lot of work. They have singularly few fads of any kind, and are, in a silent, unobtrusive way, a little inclined to be contemptuous of all gospels except the original four. When I meet a young Burnaby he always seems to me to smell of the Church Catechism, in the same way as a schoolgirl smells of bread-and-butter. Their father hammered that treatise into them along with the Latin grammar: both out-of-date things, but both things that seem to work out well in ordinary life. The young

Burnabys are deficient in ideas. They do not know what you mean when you talk to them about the foundation-stones of new civilisations, and they never read mystic poetry. On the other hand, they have a habit of getting into touch with actual things. I attribute this mental dulness and practical capacity to their peculiar education. The Latin grammar is partly responsible. "The verb agrees with its subject in number and person" is a statement which has a definite value; but no poet would make it, and the man who has absorbed, as all the young Burnabys have, the spirit of it, will almost certainly undervalue poetry and high dreams. "To do my duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call me" is a rule of life at which any social reformer, patriot, or philosopher would very properly scoff. The man who acts on it will not be responsive to the stimulus of cultured idealism.

It takes, so they say, all sorts of people to make a world. It takes a good many sorts to regenerate Ireland. I should be the last man to undervalue the work of politicians, philosophers, poets, reformers, founders of leagues, prophets of ideas, or any of the great tribe of evangelists. But I often feel that Harold Burnaby and his wife have done something for Ireland too. We should muddle on—very badly no doubt, still we should muddle on—if all our patriots were, like the patriarch Job's sons and daughters, suddenly destroy-



THE MINISTER

ed by a wind from heaven. It is, on the other hand, very hard to see how Ireland would get along at all if there were not in it a few people, like the young Burnabys, who get their living quietly by doing ordinary work. Even for the sake of the patriot gospellers themselves this dull breed of common men and women should be preserved. If we were all patriots and all had gospels, who would there be for us to preach to? Therefore it seems to me that our patriots should be more respectful to Harold Burnaby than they are. His little grey rectory, standing back from the highroad, with its ill-kept grassy drive, is no doubt a contemptible building enough. No ideas flow from it or to it; and, of course, ideas move the world. But character has a value too, and that little rectory has been, several times since it was built, a school of character of a prosaic but sound kind.

Yet after all we cannot blame the patriots for failing to recognise the value of Harold Burnaby. His own Church authorities have also failed to recognise it, and they ought to have had their eyes on him. He must be, I think, almost the only clergyman in the Church of Ireland west of the Shannon, and over forty years of age, who is not at the least a rural dean. Many of them are deans, full deans, urban, if the phrase may be used—at all events, not rural. Others are archdeacons or canons. Harold has no right to wear a black rosette on the front of his hat. I think he would

like to have some dignity of the kind. I am quite sure that Alice would like it. She would find it very pleasant to speak of him by his title, to say "The Canon is out," or "The Canon takes sugar in his tea," as other more fortunate women say "The General is dining at home to-night," or "The Judge was so sorry not to be able to come with me this afternoon." But Alice has lost hope now of ever being able to speak in this way. Bishops and those who advise them have apparently forgotten all about Harold Burnaby.

It is easy to understand that there are some men whom the Church, any Church, must keep in the background: saints, for instance, fortunately very rare creatures; and heretics, men who in one way or other would play havoc with any ecclesiastical organisation. But Harold Burnaby is neither a saint nor a heretic. He would not have disturbed the peace of the Church even if they had allowed him to preach in the pulpit of some cathedral. He believes the ordinary things in a simple, unquestioning way, and never tries to make up new creeds for himself. He is quite good, surprisingly good, but he always seems to recognise that there are great excuses to be made for people who are not good. He would never, no matter where he was, have preached any kind of violent, upsetting righteousness, dangerous to public decency and established order. He would, I expect, have been useful on a committee if he had been made a member

of one; but he never was. He was just left alone by the authorities of his Church, left for thirty-five years or so in that little parish of his in the West of Ireland with forty parishioners or thereabouts. There used to be nearly eighty at one time, but the population of Ireland is diminishing, and Harold's parish suffers with the rest of the country.

I do not think that the bishops and those in authority had any grudge against Harold Burnaby. They had no reason to suspect him of being objectionable in any way. They simply, I suppose, forgot all about him. He never bore any grudge against them. He is a man of curious humility of spirit. He says that he is quite unfit for any post except that which he occupies. This is true, no doubt, now. It is impossible to imagine Harold Burnaby plunged into the turmoil of a city parish, or stepping with dignified gait along a cathedral aisle behind a mace. He has grown old, has lost the capacity for fussing. But twenty years ago he could have fussed as well as any man if he had been given a chance. In those days he was well able to organise, to create guilds, unions, societies, brigades. He could have developed the kind of manner called "hearty," could have shaken perspiring women by the hand and asked "How's little Polly's sore eye?" in tones of fervent interest. In those days Alice could have established a "Mother's Union," and would have liked doing it. But the chance for activities of this

kind was denied them. They have worn their years out slowly in their remote parish, and the amazing thing is that no iron of bitterness has entered their souls. They remain nearer being Christians than anyone I have ever met.

Neither the leaders of Irish life nor the authorities of the Church of Ireland have appreciated Harold Burnaby or paid him any honour. But he has not wanted love and mild, unintoxicating praise. I cherish the recollection of certain long walks with him, days when we started at two o'clock and tramped steadily for the greater part of the afternoon. I went on these expeditions on fine days only, in the summer time. I rejoiced in broad views of shining sea water, in sudden peeps of tiny brown lakes hidden among hills. I sat and drew long breaths of air sharp with the scent of bog-myrtle, when we reached our destination and Harold went into some cottage to sit for half an hour with a sick man or an old woman. The same walks, I know, were taken when the winter days were short, when the tepid driving rain obliterated distant views and tinged all near things with a melancholy grey, when the return journey was made in the dark, stumbling often among stones and plunging into pools. I do not know what Harold said to those parishioners of his when he got to their homes, or what he did. But I think that he somehow brought them the most precious of all gifts, "the Bread of

Life." Those people loved him.

I like to think of him, too, as I once saw him at Christmas time, a curiously unconventional Santa Claus. He walked all day to reach two widely separated cottages in which there were children. He had his pockets full of all sorts of queer things for the delight of children: pigs made of sugar, with pink eyes, short thick legs, and little bits of cotton for tails—brittle creatures which Harold was very much afraid of breaking as he walked; little mice which ran round and round in wire cages when you turned a handle; shiny balls which were very awkward to carry; and other things. Town children, even the poorest, would have scorned the toys. They did not cost more than a penny each. But "the minister's" coming was eagerly looked for at Christmas time in these far-away cottages. I think there would be great disappointment if he forgot to bring his toys. But he never does forget.

These people of his always speak of him as "the minister" just as their Roman Catholic neighbours do. I think he likes the title. He always considers himself as "one that serveth," and prefers to be thought a minister rather than an elder, ruler, priest. He is, and always has been, very literally the servant of those around him. It is not only his own people, those who accept his ministrations in church and listen to his preaching, who come to him with troublesome re-

quests. He writes letter after letter for some unfortunate claimant of an Old Age Pension who has no evidence of the date of his birth. He searches patiently among his far-off acquaintances and finds situations for boys and girls. People of all kinds who want things done for them have a way of calling on "the minister"—and it is quite astonishing how few people in the West of Ireland seem able to do anything for themselves.

Now the whole affair of living is nearly over for him. He has, I hope, a few years still before him: more I daresay than I have. But I cannot think that he has much to look forward to. He no longer desires, if he ever did desire, promotion or honour. His income was desperately small when the children were coming one after another, when they were getting bigger, eating more and wearing out boots, when the business of putting them out in the world had to be faced. It is big enough now when only Alice and he are left. They have learned beyond the possibility of unlearning it the lesson of being content with a little; but it does please him that now, at last, Alice need not work all day long and that she can have a pretty dress occasionally. It does not worry him at all that he is ignored by all the eager people who are planning great things for Ireland. They do not reckon him worth considering, and he agrees with them. What does a poor old "minister" matter any way? But he reads the things

they say in papers his children send him, and I fancy a tender little smile is very often on his lips.

He has for forty years been living in actual, close personal intimacy with farmers, labourers, fishermen, with old men and women, with boys and girls, with mothers who have babies. He has been in and out of their houses, has chatted to them on the roads. They have sat and talked to him for hours in his house. About "The People"—that dear abstraction of all patriots—he knows nothing at all; but he does know nearly all there is to know about a large number of persons. Therefore he occasionally permits himself a wistful little smile at what he reads. Also in the course of forty years of manhood in Ireland he has come upon a great many prophets and has heard a great many gospels eloquently proclaimed. Yet somehow the golden age is still a little way ahead of us.

Perhaps, like the Kingdom of Heaven, this same golden age is either within us or has no existence at all. That, I am sure, is the way of it with Harold Burnaby. He has had love enough, work enough, faith enough; and he told me once that it is those things which really matter, not the other things which most of us try to get.

He may be right.

CHAPTER TWELVE
THE YOUNG LADY AND THE GENTLEMAN IN BUSINESS

CHAPTER TWELVE THE YOUNG LADY & GENTLEMAN IN BUSINESS

A FATHER VERY SELDOM WISHES HIS son to follow his example in the choice of a profession. He has, as a rule, the very lowest possible opinion of the way in which he himself has got his living; and, wishing well, as all good fathers do, to his son, he does his best to persuade the boy to try another line of life. This rule holds good in every rank of society. Landlords, at all events in Ireland, count land-owning as one of the most miserable ways of getting a living, and I have heard many of them expressing hopes that their sons will adopt some other profession—be soldiers, barristers, even politicians, rather than landlords, or, if escape from land-owning is impossible, take to one of the others as a supplementary profession. Landlords—so landlords themselves seem to think, and they surely ought to know—are the dedicated victims of the oppressor, the easy prey of every spoiler who roams through the fields of politics. The doctor, talking seriously to his son about the future, tells him to be anything in the world except a doctor. That profession—so the experience of those who have tried it teaches—is overcrowded, underpaid, overworked. All men else may look for some ease, some happiness. He who heals his fellow-men is less happy in his lot than a slave. The policeman is of the same mind about his profession. He sees prospects of happiness and prosperity for his children every-

where except in the force to which he belongs. In it a man is tormented by the fads of his superior officers, harried all his life by ridiculous regulations and forced to retire at an early age on an inadequate pension. The street scavenger—I quote him to show how universal the feeling is—has the lowest opinion of scavenging as a means of earning money. He advises his son to be a stone-breaker.

The reason of all this is obvious enough. It has even been crystallised into a familiar proverb. Only the owner of the shoe knows where it pinches or realises how desperately uncomfortable tightness is. The odd thing is not that most parents should dissuade their children from following their profession, but that any parent should do otherwise, that the rule should have any exception. It has, in fact, at least one. The Irish draper—I do not mean the shareholder in a great drapery company which runs a large establishment in Dublin or Belfast—the real draper, who sells ribbon by the yard across the counter of a shop in Connacht, wishes his son to become a draper's assistant, and his daughter to be a milliner or dressmaker. He does not talk about his shop. He calls it a "business house." He likes to speak of his sons and daughters, —and they always speak of themselves—as "young ladies and young gentlemen in business." The selling of stockings and the trimming of hats are "business," and going into business seems to the man who is in it

the most desirable of human destinies.

Curiously enough, a great number of people agree with him. The farmer wants his son to go into business, and tries to have him educated for that purpose. He might make the boy a carpenter or a blacksmith, which are trades which command good wages and offer to competent men a sure means of living. But it is only one farmer in fifty who ever thinks of apprenticing his son to one of these useful trades. The other forty-nine hope and try to put the boy into "business." He will not lead a healthy life, not nearly so healthy as a carpenter's. He will not earn good wages. He will all his life have to be civil and obedient, never knowing the joy of that truculent independence which is part of the inheritance of the humblest plumber. But into "business" he will go. If it is humanly possible, his father will put him there, and the boy himself is perfectly content.

The policeman's wife will make all sorts of sacrifices in order to apprentice her daughter to a dressmaker in a country shop. She herself, before her marriage, was a lady's-maid in "the big house." She was well fed, well clothed, well warmed. She travelled about various parts of the world, and obeyed the orders of one woman, who, however difficult to please, was after all only one woman, more or less consistent with herself and liking the same sort of things to-day which she liked yesterday. But the policeman's wife

will not allow her daughter to be a lady's-maid. She makes her a dressmaker's apprentice. The girl is badly fed, and has to blow warmth into her fingers on winter mornings before she can hold her needle, and is all her life liable to be scolded and nagged at by a dozen different women in the course of every day, each one of whom differs in her taste, her fancy, and her fads from any other. The mother's profession seems entirely superior to the daughter's; but the daughter's is the one which both mother and daughter set their hearts upon. It is "business," and the girl who adopts it is by that very fact "a young lady."

There are several good reasons for this fondness for "business" as a profession. The draper in an Irish country town can go bankrupt and make arrangements with his creditors oftener than any other kind of man without doing himself or his shop any serious harm. There does not seem any limit to the amount of credit which he can get from the large wholesale purveyors of drapery goods. The fact that he has failed to meet his liabilities with one firm actually encourages other firms to stock his shop for him and give him a fresh start. This is a very attractive feature about Irish provincial "business," and no doubt a far-seeing, calculating parent would be influenced by it in choosing the profession for his child. But very few parents look ahead in this way. Of every twenty parents who put their sons into drapers' shops, there

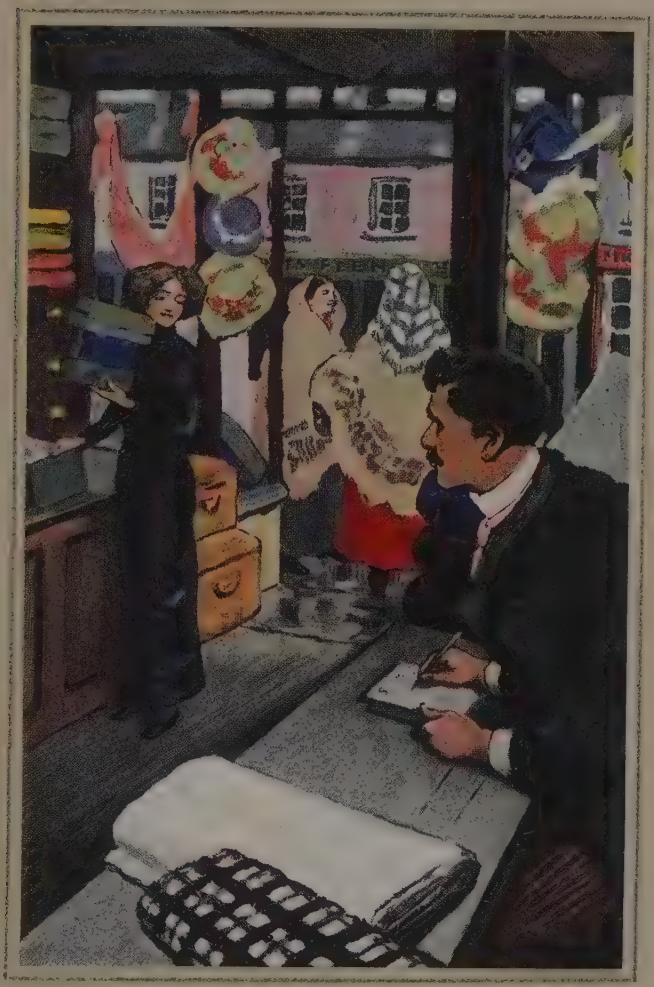
is probably not more than one who anticipates a long series of bankruptcies and reckons up the pleasing advantages of frequent insolvency.

It is true that "business" as conducted in West of Ireland towns offers unlimited opportunities for bargaining, and bargaining is the most popular of all sports in Ireland. Nothing in one of those shops has a fixed price. It is the business of the salesman to gauge the paying capacity of his customer, to raise or lower the price according to circumstances, to get as much as he possibly can for five yards of flannel, abating his first demand by halfpennies at a time until he and the buyer come to an agreement. A parent, with the future happiness of his child at heart, would naturally wish to put him into a profession in which the greater part of the work is in reality a stimulating kind of pleasure. Yet it is very doubtful whether many parents consider these chances of amusement and entertainment.

The real attraction of "business" lies in its gentility. The farmer is a man. The carpenter is a working man. A draper's assistant is a gentleman. We still make this distinction in Ireland, being an old-fashioned people with an instinctive reverence for aristocracies. In England the words "gentleman" and "man" are synonymous. Every male human being is a gentleman and every female a lady. It was once my lot to visit a workhouse in order to carry a mes-

sage to a sailor with a broken leg. When I had finished my business with him he said to me: "There's a gentleman in the yard who would be glad to speak to you." This gentleman turned out to be a tramp who had somehow got money enough to drink himself into an attack of delirium tremens, from which he was slowly recovering. My sailor friend was an Englishman, and used the word "gentleman" in the broad, democratic way universal in his country. An Irishman would have called the drunken tramp simply a man, for the Irish still use the word "gentlemen" to describe only those of a certain social position: drapers' assistants, for instance, bank clerks, military officers, and landed proprietors. We still draw a line between those who are gentlemen and ladies and those who are not. The attractive thing about "business" as a profession is that it is above the line.

The English having succeeded in depriving the word "gentleman" of all meaning by their recklessly indiscriminate use of it, now affect to see something comic and contemptible in the yearning for gentility. There is no commoner butt for the wit of the minor satirist than the lady in reduced circumstances who still tries to be a lady, or the young woman who aims at securing for herself a position in polite circles. It is, of course, from the English point of view, quite right to scoff at such people. When every woman has a good right to the title, including "the lady who



COUNTRY SHOP ASSISTANTS

comes in for the day to do the charing," it is clearly absurd for any woman to claim to be a lady in any peculiar sense or aim at establishing a corner in gentility. But no Irishman ought to scoff; for we believe that some women are ladies and some men gentlemen, while others, equally virtuous and worthy, are not. Social ambition is with us the desire of a real thing. It is, moreover, a noble kind of ambition, since it is the desire of a spiritual, not a material thing, and since many people are willing to sacrifice money, comfort, and other goods in order to get it. It is always noble to sacrifice the material for the spiritual. And no one ought to mock those who do it.

Nor ought we to rail, as we often do, against our system of national education because it has turned the minds of our boys towards "business" and gentility, instead of leaving them placidly content to earn good wages by planing planks or shoeing horses. Still less ought we to sneer at our convent schools, which year by year are sending out young women eager to be ladies and utterly dissatisfied with a life spent in churning butter and baking cakes. The fact is that a fine ambition of a spiritual kind has been implanted in the breasts of our boys and girls. They have been taught to look for something in life besides good food, sound boots, soft beds, and the other tangible comforts which money buys. The English may, if they like, mock at those who want to be ladies

and gentlemen, and condemn any kind of education that fosters such desires in the young. They will do so just as thoroughly materialised people will mock at anyone who tries to be a Christian and will regard sacrifices made for the sake of the Christian ideal as supremely foolish. We who can still appreciate ideals, religious and ethical, recognise, or ought to recognise, that the education of our boys and girls is carried on in the best possible manner: makes all the boys want to be gentlemen, which is the next best thing to wanting to be saints, and half the girls want to be ladies, the other half of them desiring to be nuns, much the same thing as saints, and the only thing better than being a lady.

Katie Kavanagh, now Mrs Bryan, is a very good example of the way in which the passion for gentility masters all other desires and moulds life. Katie's father was a groom, which is not a genteel thing to be. But he died. Katie's mother was left very poor, but she was a woman with ambitions and wished to do the best she could for Katie. She took in washing, and did the work very well. She might, since she was the only laundress in the neighbourhood who could wash, have made quite a good income. But she steadily refused to earn more than was absolutely necessary. She was not lazy, but she felt that washing other people's clothes spoiled her own and Katie's chances of being recognised as ladies. Therefore she

did as little washing as possible, and kept up a fiction that she only accepted work from two or three personal friends as a favour to them. She ignored as far as possible the fact that she was paid, and never argued with her customers about disputed items in the bill. If anyone complained that pocket-handkerchiefs ought to be washed for elevenpence a dozen, and that a shilling was too much to pay, Mrs Kavanagh reduced her bill by a penny with a dignified smile, and thereafter refused to do any more washing for that customer at all at any price. She could endure starvation; she could not and would not engage in sordid wrangles about price. She had before her the ideal figure, the lady of great and gracious ways. In spirit, in spite of her circumstances, she was a lady.

Katie was sent to school, where she learned to write very prettily and to spell most ordinary words and to recite several nice poems. When she came home from school in the afternoon she had lessons in playing the piano, and walked through the streets with a roll of music in a shiny case under her arm, so that everybody knew she was learning to play the piano. She was never allowed to dip her hands into a washtub, and Mrs Kavanagh often boasted that her girl did not know how to iron out her own pinafores. Music—Mrs Kavanagh was under no delusions on the subject—is an entirely unremunerative art for

girls like Katie. It was therefore—so Mrs Kavanagh judged, and judged rightly—a thing which a lady ought to practise. The music lessons cost a good deal and Mrs Kavanagh sometimes went short of food, but she did not grudge the sacrifice of her own comfort.

When Katie was sixteen years of age one of Mrs Kavanagh's customers offered to take the girl and train her as lady's-maid. She offered a comfortable home, some wages, and a prospect of more wages in the future. Mrs Kavanagh indignantly refused the offer. The lady who made it, a well-intentioned woman, called on Mrs Kavanagh in order to discuss the matter. Mrs Kavanagh cut the discussion short. "If someone was to offer to train your eldest daughter as a housemaid," she said, "what would you say to them?" The lady had no answer to give. "What would you do to a person who made such an offer?" said Mrs Kavanagh. The lady fled. What Mrs Kavanagh did was to withdraw her services as laundress from that lady, thereby marking her sense of the outrageous insult she had been made to suffer.

Katie was apprenticed to a dressmaker. No fee was given—Mrs Kavanagh could not possibly have saved enough for the smallest fee,—but Katie was paid no wages during the term of her apprenticeship. Nor was she fed by the employer. She breakfasted before she began work, went home for dinner in the middle of the day, and had tea, also at home, when

she could get it. She worked with five other girls in a room which had air enough in it for two people, which was badly lighted and, in winter, very cold. She worked for as many hours as her employer told her, and was taught absolutely nothing about dressmaking. She sewed long seams all day with a machine. She was never allowed to see a garment cut out, and was forbidden to enter the fitting-room. But she was "in business," and her position as a "young lady" was established. In the house of Mrs Kavanagh's customer, the one who made the insulting proposal, Katie would have been a "girl." It is better to be a half-starved, anæmic "young lady" than a plump and smiling "girl."

After three years' apprenticeship Katie became an "improver" and earned several shillings a week in wages. She worked under a dressmaker in a shop, and the proprietor of the shop allowed her to buy any clothes she wanted from his stock at what he called cost price. He even allowed her to anticipate her wages, and encouraged her to buy pretty ribbons and nice materials for blouses. At this time Katie was very well dressed—quite, so Mrs Kavanagh said, as a "young lady" should be dressed. She also learned a little, very little, about dressmaking, and was invited about Christmas-time to the commercial ball which was always held at that time of year. The committee of the commercial ball is very particular about the tone of

Peter sold the materials on which she worked. His customers were supposed to pay for his cloth and her skill. The customers did not take to the plan. Poor Peter's goods were dear. Katie's skill was small. The inevitable failure drew nearer.

Failure, indeed, would not have mattered much. Peter might have made an agreement with his creditors or gone through the bankruptcy court. Then he could have started again with fresh credit from another wholesale firm. He and Katie might have gone on through many failures and lost nothing of their gentility. But unfortunately Peter died. Katie was left a widow with a hopelessly insolvent business on her hands. No wholesale firm would give her credit for a yard of ribbon or a pair of gloves. She closed the shop. Her brief married life—it lasted altogether two years—had not been fortunate, but it left her as ladylike as ever and as strongly convinced of the value of gentility.

She went on dressmaking, earning pitifully little by her work, and adding a trifle to her income by taking apprentices at very small fees. Other mothers, like Mrs Kavanagh, wanted to put their daughters into a ladylike profession, and were prepared to pay Katie a little for teaching the girls what she herself had never learned and did not know. She lived in the upper part of the house and managed to let the shop to a retired postman, who sold apples, sweets and

newspapers in it. He had an instinct for making small profits, and had a little money saved, on which he could fall back. He prospered and began to grow fat. He was a kind-hearted man, and it grieved him to think of Katie, working hard and earning little upstairs. He was disquieted by the thought of her, a pale-faced little woman in a thin black gown, shivering through winter days without a fire. He could not enjoy his own food properly because he knew that she was living on dry bread and weak tea. He offered to marry her.

Katie refused him. She had been a "lady in business" since she left school. She had worshipped gentility. She made her last sacrifice at the altar of her ideal when she refused to declass herself by marrying a postman who sold cocoanut candy to sticky children.

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